

Czechoslovak Diplomacy and the Gulag

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Czechoslovak Diplomacy and the Gulag

**Deportation of Czechoslovak Citizens
to the USSR and the Negotiation for Their
Repatriation, 1945–1953**

Milada Poliřenská



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Czechoslovakia had not been at war with the Soviet Union. Its status, officially, was that of a liberated ally. In some way or other which I never fully understood – as a result, perhaps, of the great popularity Beneš enjoyed in the Western countries – the impression got about in the West that an independent government was being reestablished in that country. It was an assumption for which I saw no evidence... What little we were able to learn about what was occurring in that part of Czechoslovak territory occupied by Soviet forces made it evident that that every device of infiltration, intimidation, and intrigue was being brought into play with a view to laying the groundwork for establishment of a Communist monopoly of power in that country.

George F. Kennan

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Abbreviations

AMZV – Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

ASSR – Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

AVPRF – Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Ministerstva inostrannykh Del Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation

Beloemigranty – White Émigrés

Bundestag – the parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany

ČSSZ – Česká správa sociálního zabezpečení, Czech Social Security Administration

ČTK – Česká tisková kancelář, Czechoslovak (Czech) News Agency

DS – Demokratická strana, Democratic Party, Slovak political party, 1944-1948

dův. – *důvěrné*, confidential (Czech)

GARF – Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii, State Archive of the Russian Federation

Gestapo – Geheime Staatspolizei, secret state police of Nazi Germany

GKO – Gosudarstvennyy Kommissariat Oborony, State Commissariat of Defense of the USSR

GOKO – see GKO

Gosbank – Gosudarstvenniy Bank, state bank, Soviet Union

Gulag – Glavnoe upravleniye ispravitel'no-trudovykh lageryey i koloniy, Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies

GUPVI – Glavnoe Upravlenie MVD SSSR po delam voennoplennyykh i internirovannykh, Chief Administration of the Ministry of the Interior of the USSR for the Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees

GUVS MVD – Glavnoe Upravlenie Vooruzhennykh Sil Ministerstva Vnutrennikh del, Chief Administration of the Armed Forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Soviet Union

HG – Hlinka Guard, Slovakia

- HM – Hlinka Youth, Slovakia
- HSLS – Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana, Hlinka Slovak People's Party, leading political force in pro-Nazi Slovakia during World War II
- IPN – Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Institute of National Remembrance, Poland
- KDU-ČSL – Křesťanská a demokratická unie–Československá strana lidová, Christian and Democratic Union–Czechoslovak People's Party
- KGB – Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti, Committee for State Security (1954–1991), Soviet Union
- kolkhoz – kollektivnoe khozyaystvo, collective farm, Soviet Union
- KPV – Konfederace politických vězňů (Československa, České republiky), Confederation of Political Prisoners (of Czechoslovakia, of the Czech Republic)
- KPVS – Konfederácia politických väzňov Slovenska, Confederation of Political Prisoners of Slovakia
- SANO – Slovenská asociácia násilne odvedených, Slovak Association of those Forcibly Abducted
- KSČ – Komunistická strana Československa, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
- KSS – Komunistická strana Slovenska, Communist Party of Slovakia
- MFDnes – Mladá Fronta Dnes*, Czech daily newspaper
- MGB – Ministerstvo gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti, Ministry of State Security (1946–1953), Soviet Union
- MID – Ministerstvo inostrannykh del, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (from 1946), Soviet Union and Russian Federation
- MNO – Ministry of National Defense, Czechoslovakia
- MNV – Local National Committee, Czechoslovakia
- MVD – Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Soviet Union
- MV – Ministerstvo vnitra, Ministry of the Interior, Czechoslovakia
- MZV – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia (1918–1969) and of the Czech Republic
- NKGB – Narodny komissariat gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti, People's Commissariat of State Security, predecessor of MGB, Soviet Union
- NKID, Narkomindel – Narodny kommissariat inostrannykh del, People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (until 1946), predecessor of MID, Soviet Union

- NKO – Narodny kommissariat oborony, People's Commissariat of Defense (until 1946), Soviet Union
- NKVD – Narodny kommissariat vnutrennikh del, People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (1917–1946), Bolshevik Russia and Soviet Union
- OBZ – Obranné zpravodajství, Military Intelligence (Czechoslovakia), established in 1945
- ODS – Civic Democratic Party, Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic
- ONV – District National Committee, Czechoslovakia
- ORB MVD – Otdel'ny Rabochiy Batal'on Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, Separate Labor Battalion of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Soviet Union
- ORB MVS – Otdel'ny Rabochiy Batal'on Ministerstva Vooruzhennykh Sil, Separate Labor Battalion of the Ministry of Armed Forces (Soviet Union)
- POW – Prisoner of war
- PTP – Auxiliary Technical Battalion, Czechoslovakia
- RSFSR – Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
- s. – *sekretno*, secret (Russian)
- SA – Sturmabteilung, Nazi organization
- SANO – Slovak Association of Those Forcibly Abducted
- SAV – Slovak Action Committee
- SAV – Slovak Academy of Sciences
- SD – Sicherheitsdienst, security service of Nazi Germany
- SMERSH – Smert' Shpionam, Death to Spies, counterintelligence agency of the NKVD, Soviet Union
- SNB – Police force, Czechoslovakia
- SNR – Slovenská národná rada, Slovak National Council
- Spetsgospital – Spetsialnyy gospital, special hospital, Soviet Union
- ss. – *sovershenno sekretno*, top secret (Russian)
- SS – Schutzstaffel, Nazi organization
- SSSR – USSR, Russian abbreviation of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- StB – State Security, Czechoslovak intelligence
- TASS – Telegraphnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza, Press Agency of the Soviet Union
- TsFO – Tsentralny finansovy otdel, Central Financial Department
- TsKhIDK – Tsentr khraneniya istoriko-dokumentalnykh kollektsey, Center for the Preservation of Historico-Documentary Collections, Moscow

- TsK VKP(b) – Tsentralny komitet Vsesoyuznoy kommunisticheskoy partii (bolshevikov), Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks)
- UK RSFSR – Ugolovny kodeks, Criminal Code of the RSFSR
- UMVD – Upravlenie ministerstva vnutrennikh del, Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Soviet Union
- UN – United Nations
- UNO – United Nations Organization
- UPVI – Upravlenie MVD SSSR po delam voennoplennyykh i internirovannykh, Administration of the Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees
- UPVI-GUPVI – Upravlenie MVD SSSR po delam voennoplennyykh i internirovannykh – Glavnoe Upravlenie MVD SSSR po delam voennoplennyykh i internirovannykh, Administration of Prisoners of War and Internees – Chief Administration of the Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees
- USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- ÚV KSČ – Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
- VKP(b) – Vsesoyuznaya Kommunisticheskaya Partiya (bolshevikov), All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) (1925–1952)
- ZV SNB – Land Headquarters of the Police Force (Czechoslovakia)

Preface

At the beginning of the 1990s, when I started my research into the deportation of Czechs and Slovaks for slave labor in the Soviet Union, I had a theme before me which was truly a challenge. For many decades the subject had been taboo. Virtually nothing about it had been documented or analyzed, and even the existence of the theme was scarcely known. However, in the democratic conditions that followed the end of Communism, it soon became a relatively outstanding focus of attention for both the general public and in official places. The question of compensation arose, and the absence of any scholarly treatment based on archival research was sorely felt.

I would like to thank all those who have helped me in the research and who, by their support, advice and information, contributed both to the Czech publication, *Čechoslováci v Gulagu a československá diplomacie 1945–1953*, published by the LIBRI publishing house in 2006, and to this English translation, published with amendments and the use of material which subsequently became available.

I worked on this project from 1992 to 1995 at the Institute of International Relations in Prague, from 1999 to 2002 at the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and from 2004 at the Anglo-American University in Prague. I am grateful to the directors of both institutes, Otto Pick and Oldřich Tůma, and to Alan Krautstengl, President of the Anglo-American University for their support.

The early work on the project (1992–1994) and the research in the Russian archives was made possible thanks to a research grant from the Central European University. I am grateful to Sylvie Rohanová, at that time at the Central European University and the Open Society Fund, for her help and encouragement, and also Rudolf Slánský, then ambassador of the Czech Republic in Moscow, for his interest. The knowledge and experience of Vladimír Bystrov and Mečislav Borák, and of the two reviewers of the Czech edition, Zbyněk Zeman and Jiří Kocian, was of significant specialist support. I likewise thank the Slovak Nation's Memory Institute in Bratislava for its help and for the publication of a list of deported Czechoslovaks on its web pages.

I must especially thank Barbara Day for her dedicated work on the translation of the book into English. Hanna Vasilevich provided valuable help with the transliteration from Russian and with the geographical identification of locations. The translation would not have been possible without financial support from the International Visegrad Fund and the Centre français de recherche en sciences sociales (CEFRES) in Prague in cooperation with the Centre d'études des mondes russe, caucasien et centre-européen (CERCEC) at l'École des hautes études en science sociales (l'EHESS) in Paris. I am grateful to the director of CEFRES Françoise Mayer and to Alain Blum, director of CERCEC and chair of the research project "Les archives sonores de l'Europe du Goulag," for their help in making the results of my research available at an international level. The Nadace Sophia (Sophia Foundation) also contributed financially to the English translation. The project as a whole has received major support from the European University Institute in Florence, which awarded me a Senior Fernand Braudel Fellowship, and the Anglo-American University in Prague.

My thanks go to the archivists in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague and in the archives in Slovakia, and also to the late Mária Knížková of the Slovak Association of Those Forcibly Abducted to the USSR by the Organs of the NKVD in Bratislava, to Olga Hulínová of what was formerly the Centre for the Documentation of the Illegality of the Communist Regime in Prague, and to the local authorities and mayors of the parishes and towns in Slovakia where I carried out my research.

I am especially grateful to the survivors of deportation, few of whom were still alive at the time of writing, and the families of deportees and witnesses who shared their life stories with me and provided valuable information. These were above all Gejza Pásztor in Ulm in Germany, Barnabás Elek and Július Pecsök of Veľký Blh, Ján Kardos of Hrhov, Jan (Johann) Jachmann and Andrej Lang of Chmeľnica, Ján Antal and Anna Grondžáková of Kežmarok, Rudolf Stybar, Margita Lichvárová and Ján Mičura of Košice, Štefánia Čadecká of Kysucké Nové Město, Eva Demková of Bratislava, Margita Beláková of Hronovce, Jan Jusko of Sliepkovce, Hortenzia Sarvašová-Laborecká and Vladimír Juskiv of Prešov, Eva Tolarovičová of Trnava, Štefan Kanyai of Nitra, Ján Kekeš of Zátin, Stanislav Jurko of Michalovce, Michal Tancár of Gelnica and Margita Bencová of Dolný Turček.

Last but not least, I must thank my own family for their support and understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Some Notes on the Concept of Czechoslovakia from the Point of View of the Constitution and National Identity

The determining aim of the political strategy and tactics of Edvard Beneš and the Czechoslovak government in exile during and after World War II was to ensure the Munich Agreement being made null and void from the inception. The key claims of this political concept were (1) the restoration of Czechoslovakia to its pre-Munich borders and constitution, and (2) the security of Czechoslovakia against a repeat of “Munich.” The theory of the legal and political continuity of the Czechoslovak Republic was based on the standpoint that the Czechoslovak state did not come to an end with the occupation, and that Beneš’s abdication, having been enforced illegally, was invalid.¹ The concept of the legal and political continuity of Czechoslovakia in international law was established in 1941. Czechoslovakia became an internationally recognized state, part of the anti-Hitler coalition, and the restoration of the state of Czechoslovakia became one of the wartime aims of the Allies. A guarantee that the causes which led to “Munich” would be definitively set aside would, in Beneš’s concept of “the negation of Munich,” be a foreign policy oriented toward an alliance with the USSR, the carrying out of political and economic changes in the state, and newly structured national relations.²

The political concept of “the voiding of Munich” and the continuity of pre-Munich Czechoslovakia was established as the main idea behind Czechoslovak resistance to Hitler. The concept was extremely attractive. It offered Czechs a return to the known world out of which – through “Munich” and everything that followed – they had been wrenched. They had been forced into an insecure and temporary life. As well as an end to the war, the future should promise their return to a secure world. The policy of “the voiding of Munich” not only merged with their understanding

of what Czech history was about; it rested on the Masarykian ideal, a starting point for perception of Czech national identity. This had been a great help to Beneš in his career and was part of his image. One could not be surprised by this. Edvard Beneš, as a personality and as a politician, may have had his opponents and critics (Štefan Osuský, for example) but his political concept wore a strong “aura.” In the given circumstances, alternative concepts were unable to compete.

In the postwar period up to February 1948 the policy of the Czechoslovak Communists employed the theme of “the security of Czechoslovakia against a repeat of Munich” more than anything else. Their policy was oriented toward alliance with the Soviet Union, and a number of political and economic changes in postwar Czechoslovakia enabled the Communist Party to present itself as actively cooperating with Beneš’s political concept between 1945 and 1948. The Communists profited from the wide support that “the negation of Munich” held among the Czech population.

1. The Constitutional Concept of Slovakia³

Act no. 1/1939Sl. on an independent Slovak state was passed on 14 March 1939. Constitutional Act no. 185/1939 Sl. on the constitution of the Slovak Republic was passed on 21 June 1939. As of this date the Slovak Republic was recognized *de jure* by Germany, Italy, Japan, the Vatican, Spain, Switzerland and Poland; in May 1939 it had been recognized *de facto* by Great Britain and France. It was also, in connection with the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, recognized by the Soviet Union. From 16 September 1939, until Slovakia entered the war alongside Germany against the USSR on 22 June 1941, the Soviet Union recognized the Slovak Republic *de jure*. In December 1939 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow was closed. In March 1940 the Moscow leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party instructed the leadership at home that the Communists in Slovakia should fight for the complete independence of the Slovak state; the renewal of Czechoslovakia was not mentioned at all.⁴ However, the number of states that recognized Edvard Beneš as Czechoslovak president gradually increased with the successful progress of the Allies and the forthcoming defeat of Germany, so that Slovakia found itself in ever deeper isolation, since diplomatic relations with it had been suspended.

In 1944 the Slovak government passed twenty-one laws and governmental decrees in the hope of preparing Slovakia for the approaching bat-

tlefront.⁵ There were, however, no provisions that anticipated a mass deportation of the civilian population. There were no instructions whereby the local authorities could arrange, in the case of requests from the Red Army, for the provision of labor, or according to which they could proceed with internments and deportations already under way. In this vacuum, it was very easy for the Red Army and the NKVD authorities to impose their will.

It was known in Slovakia that an agreement on the relationship between the Czechoslovak administration and the Soviet command concerning the arrival of the Red Army on Czechoslovak territory had been signed in London on 8 May 1944. It was agreed in this that the arrival of the Red Army on Czechoslovak territory would at the same time mean the renewal of Czechoslovak sovereignty. The Slovak government published a declaration refuting this agreement, saying that only the Slovak government and the Slovak parliament had the right to decide and to close agreements.⁶

For many Slovaks, President Jozef Tiso remained the symbol of the independence of the Slovak state and “a rock in a stormy sea.”⁷ Standing alongside him from 5 September 1944 was his cousin Štefan Tiso, who followed Vojtech Tuka as prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. After the crushing of the Slovak National Uprising there was, from mid-October 1944 to the end of May 1945, a certain stabilization of the power system of the Slovak state.⁸ Various paramilitary and armed organizations of the state, the Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party (often: People’s Party) and the army were activated. The Home Guard was expanded to be used mainly as construction and technical units, and the Hlinka Youth was also activated.⁹ However, it was above all the militarization of the Hlinka Guard¹⁰ which strengthened its military nature and discipline. At the end of March 1945 thirty-eight Emergency Units of the Hlinka Guard, six field companies and three field battalions reached their maximum numbers. That was more than 5,000 men; there were around 5,900 men in the Hlinka Guard.¹¹ The compulsory participation of the civilian population, students and young people in fortification work was legalized; mobilization took place in two waves – to 12 January and to 5 March 1945; and transports of Jews were still being sent to the concentration camps. In spite of this mobilization of the regime’s resources, at the end of 1944 manifestations of passivity and alibi-ism and signs of disintegration could be noted.

While the international authority of the Czechoslovak government in exile increased and the renewal of Czechoslovakia in its prewar borders

was planned by the anti-Hitler powers, the Slovak state was bound to Germany to the end. Ivan Kamenec and other authors have proved that declarations about a loyal alliance with Hitler's Germany and about this alliance being a basic condition of the existence of the Slovak state and nation persisted in Slovakia up to the end of March 1945.

The Czech political parties did not overcome their "Czechoslovakism." They could not understand the rise of the Slovak nation nor the new Slovak political realities, and they were unable to overcome the Munich complex and features of Czech nationalism.¹² Understandably, the Slovaks took note of the pro-Soviet orientation of the Beneš government – above all, the proclamations about the unity of the Czechoslovak nation and a future centralist republic, and about treachery, collective guilt and punishing the Slovaks.¹³

Government circles in Slovakia rebuffed the possibility of a renewal of the Czechoslovak Republic, but no realistic alternative had been worked out for the approaching critical situation. The constitutional concepts which emerged in Slovakia were so vague they had little chance of success. The plan of Ferdinand Čatloš¹⁴ to carry out a revolution in Slovakia, to establish a military dictatorship and to become a frontline ally of the Red Army, is "the only known specific attempt by the leaders of the government of the People's Party to search for some sort of way out of World War II for their state, and to end the alliance with Germany."¹⁵

What was known as the Hodža Plan for a Central European federation was turned down by the Slovak government. Milan Hodža and Štefan Osuský¹⁶ considered a renewal of the Czechoslovak Republic in which Slovakia would have its own government and legislative. This, however, foundered on the resistance of the Czechoslovak government in exile. A confederative arrangement of Central Europe with Slovakia as an independent state unit also figured in the ideas of Ferdinand Durčanský,¹⁷ who was an active member of the young branch of the People's Party and defended the right of Slovakia to have its own state. For completeness, we add that the idea of a Soviet Slovakia was also floating among the Slovak Communists, i.e., the inclusion of Slovakia as an independent republic of the Soviet Union.¹⁸

In the given situation, however, the further existence of the state hung exclusively on Nazi Germany and its military and political assistance and strength, which was approaching its final stage. At the beginning of April 1945 President Jozef Tiso and other representatives of the Slovak state left for the West. Tiso announced on 27 April that: "The Slovak state lives on as long as its president, government and other administrative authorities

live and work,”¹⁹ but on 8 May what was called the “capitulation agreement” of the Slovak government was signed, surrendering in Austria to the US Army. The question has been posed as to when the Slovak state actually came to an end; whether it was on 5 April 1945 when Slovakia was liberated and President Jozef Tiso and its government left Slovak territory, and when the Košice government program was announced, or whether it was earlier, on 1 September 1944, with the foundation of the Slovak National Committee and with its directive no. 1/1944 Coll.

The Slovak National Council (*Slovenská národná rada*, SNR) was founded in December 1943 and on 1 September 1944 legalized itself as the supreme revolutionary organ of the state power and administration in Slovakia and as the supreme organ of the home resistance: “The SNR executes, and will execute, the entire legislative, government and executive power on the entire territory of Slovakia in its pre-Munich frontiers, and that without regard as to whether separate parts of Slovakia will be liberated by their own strength or by the allied armies.”²⁰

The SNR thus refused to return to the pre-Munich state. The new legal order in Slovakia had to derive from the sovereign power of the Slovak nation only, in the course of which the SNR retained the laws and the order of the Slovak Republic (1939-1945) insofar as they did not conflict with the democratic and republican spirit.²¹ On 7 September 1944, at the request of the Czechoslovak government, the United States recognized the allied statute of the insurgent troops in Slovakia; Great Britain joined on 9 October and meanwhile Moscow declared the same. In this way the Slovak National Uprising placed itself among the allied powers of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Edvard Beneš assumed that once the Soviets had occupied more extensive territory in Slovakia, a Czechoslovak governmental delegation would take over the civilian administration. This caused a number of disagreements to rage among the Czechoslovak exiles in London during negotiations concerning the composition of the Czechoslovak delegation for the liberated territory.²² As far as the SNR was concerned, this “governmental delegation” was to be no more than the mediator between the SNR and the government in London.

In preinsurrection and insurrection documents of the Slovak National Committee there were no unambiguous formulations concerning the shape of the postwar constitutional ordering of Czechoslovakia. The only mention of how the insurgent representation imagined the new Czechoslovak Republic is in a presentation by Karol Šmidke²³ at a meeting of political advisers of the Czechoslovak government delegation with the foreign

bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Komunistická strana Československa, KSČ) in Moscow on 29 August 1944. According to Šmidke, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus would have their own autonomous governments, while the Czech lands would be administered only by the central government.²⁴ Šmidke here interpreted the view of the SNR and at the same time delivered the report of the 5th underground leadership of the Communist Party of Slovakia (Komunistická strana Slovenska, KSS) of 7 July 1944 to Klement Gottwald.²⁵ Concerning the constitutional position of Slovakia, the report said: “incorporation into the USSR would be best, but if a Czechoslovak Republic should come about, then it should be of federal nations, and socialist.”²⁶

The Slovak historian Michal Barnovský thinks that the leaders of the KSS were aware that it was not a viable option to incorporate Slovakia into the USSR, but that nevertheless they wanted to warn Beneš that this was under consideration in Slovakia as a way of forcing him to accept the Slovak conditions. The idea of uniting Slovakia with the USSR was shared by only one part of the Slovak Communists, but the leadership glorified it and raised it almost to a general phenomenon. A clear majority of Slovak Communists supported a federal arrangement. Barnovský also added:

If incorporation into the USSR were seriously considered, then the incorporation of Subcarpathian Rus with the USSR must have been counted on, too. That would mean anticipating the later development of events in this region. There would therefore be certain reasons: as early as the 5th Congress of the Comintern in 1924 the question was raised of the incorporation of the Ukrainian regions in countries bordering Soviet Ukraine by way of socialist revolution. Nevertheless, after the recognition of Czechoslovakia in its pre-Munich frontiers, this alternative was not counted on.

During the Slovak National Uprising the future constitutional position of Slovakia in the context of the Czechoslovak Republic was formulated only in a general form, as fulfilling the basics of equal treatment. The activity of the SNR was interrupted with the suppression of the Uprising and was not renewed until the beginning of 1945, on liberated territory from which the Red Army and its allies the Romanian Army and the Czechoslovak Army Corps had expelled the German Army and its allies. By then it was clear that the constitutional concept of the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in exile in Moscow was essentially different from that of the domestic Communist resistance. The KSS, with which the Social Democrats merged after the unification gathering of 17 September 1944, declared itself for the principle of “equal treatment” and

for the principle of the sovereignty of the Slovak nation. The leadership of the KSČ, meanwhile, insisted on a unitary state on the Stalinist model.²⁷

The idea of a federation appeared in the first document released by the delegation of the SNR for the liberated territories, the Manifesto of the SNR (4 February 1945). It was then discussed by the plenum of the delegation of the SNR on 17 February 1945, in connection with President Beneš's planned trip to Moscow, i.e., in connection with negotiations about the first postwar Czechoslovak government and its program. In February 1945, in the SNR's documents, the Slovak national authorities were understood to be the Slovak parliament and government. Gustáv Husák returned from Moscow to Košice on 20 February. He had been negotiating with the leading representatives of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Moscow, and according to him, Klement Gottwald was still wavering and had not come out against a federation.²⁸ The interrupted activity of the SNR was officially renewed on 21 February 1945 in Košice. Soon afterwards, at a conference of the Communist Party of Slovakia from 28 February to 1 March 1945, a federative state was discussed in Košice. On 2 March 1945 the SNR discussed and approved its attitude regarding negotiations with representatives of the Czech parties in Moscow about the government and its program, including the position of the Slovak nation, and about the relationship of the SNR and the central government. The SNR asked to be recognized as the only representative "of the political will of the Slovak nation, with the right to represent the name of Slovakia and to decide about Slovak matters."²⁹ They also asked Beneš's government to revoke its announcement of 30 June about a united Czechoslovak nation.³⁰

An asymmetrical federation on the principle of nationwide central organs and representation of the SNR was being proposed. This resolution by the SNR came up against the Czech political parties (including the KSČ) and on Gottwald's initiative, the SNR delegation retreated and accepted the KSČ program. The result of the Moscow negotiations of 22-29 March 1945 (where President Beneš and other members of the Czechoslovak government in exile were already, having left London on 6 March) was the Košice government program. This program contained the asymmetric model of a constitutional arrangement without defining the mutual relationships and competence between the government and the SNR. František Vnuk says that the delegates of the SNR were excluded from all negotiations for the first three days, that they were not invited until the 25 March when the position of Slovakia in the renewed state was being discussed, and that their presence was not very significant.³¹

The position and authority of the SNR after 5 April 1945 were defined by the Decree of the SNR no. 30/1945 Coll.³² Because of the unresolved competence between the government and the SNR, ministers and commissioners, when the government did not *de facto* govern Slovakia, the government organized a ministerial commission for the constitutional position of Slovakia on 24 May 1945.³³ Karel Kaplan writes:

[A]fter their arrival on liberated territory in April 1945, the president and ministers recognized the authority and position of power of the SNR and its delegates. The Slovak organs truly ruled, and the government handed over the liberated territory into their authority.³⁴

Vladimír Goněc writes that the SNR seized state power as the sovereign organ of a sovereign state and it was not until later, when electing the representatives of sovereign Slovakia together with other elected representatives, that they had to agree the setting up of a new state, and gradually reach a final agreement about the constitutional form of the new Czechoslovak Republic.³⁵

I incline more toward the opinion that the power of the SNR on the liberated territories in what was called the Košice period (February to May 1945) gained ground only with great difficulty, and that the real bearer of power was the Soviet Army. The power of the SNR had little chance to assert itself alongside the dominant position of the Red Army and it was even more difficult for the exiled government in London to demonstrate its authority on the liberated territory. I do not, however, think that the process of handing over power on the liberated territory was carried out in the way described by Vnuk:

the humiliating protocol when the Soviet Army administration first handed over the liberated territory to the administration of the Czechoslovak government, which then handed it over to the administration of the SNR.³⁶

Marek Syrný documents that as early as 23 October 1944 eight delegates of the SNR were sent with members of the KSS and Democrats together with Minister František Němec's delegation from Banská Bystrica to Lviv (Lvov). These eight delegates were to take over the administration of liberated Slovakia. To these were added Ladislav Novomeský (KSS) and Ján Ursíny (Democratic Party, DP), who in October 1944 were sent to London to negotiate with President Beneš. Before the representation of the SNR assumed its mission in Trebišov on 21 January 1945, the political commissar of the 4th Ukrainian Front General Mekhlis intervened and

banned two delegates of the Democratic Party from political activity.³⁷ The Board of Commissioners³⁸ was not restructured until the Czechoslovak government and Slovak politicians arrived in Košice from Moscow, and even then (for a number of reasons, including communications), their jurisdiction could not effectively cover the liberated territory. I think that in the first weeks after liberation the national committees, in which Communists supported by the Red Army predominated, held the dominant role on the liberated territory. I agree with Syrný that through the national committees the Communists aimed at the transfer of the state administration from state bureaucrats (inclining toward civic parties) to the local population (the masses). Because of the revolutionary and radicalizing conditions, and thanks to the presence of the Red Army, they wanted to assert themselves as initiators and to win majorities in the national committees. It was in fact at the local level of the national committees that shortly after the liberation a conflict flared up about influence among the Communists and the democratic and civilian politicians, for the DS did not begin to establish itself as a party until the second half of January 1945. In fact, by that time the Communists and pro-Soviet activists were denouncing local organizers of the Democratic Party to the Red Army and the KGB, thus disposing of the political competition by deportations to the Soviet Union. A number of national committees were directly initiated and formed by trusted operators of Svoboda's army, which also helped the Communists and pro-Soviet activists in their rapid rise to power. Later in the spring the Commission of the Interior – at whose head stood the influential Communist Gustáv Husák – was entrusted with the founding of national committees. By that time, however, the biggest wave of deportations was nearly over.

The signing of what is called the 1st Prague Agreement took place on 2 June 1945. Shortly before this the Slovak Communists retreated from forcing through a federation, and thus the 1st Prague Agreement confirmed the principles of the governing program and turned down the possibility of federation. Nevertheless, the existence of an independent Slovak nation equal to the Czech nation was recognized. However, a supplemental protocol known as the 2nd Prague Agreement of 11 April 1946 led toward the implementation of a centralized Czechoslovakia, which was completed by the acceptance of the 3rd Prague Agreement of 24 July 1946.

2. The Position of the Ruling Circles on the Issue of Nationalities in Czechoslovakia

The theme of my study is closely connected with the policy of “the negation of Munich,” in particular with the effort to restructure relationships between nationalities and build a nation-state of Czechs and Slovaks. This concept of a nation-state could only be realized by the expulsion of minorities and the assimilation of their remainder – simultaneously a punishment for the betrayal of Czechoslovakia and a defense against a repetition of “Munich.”³⁹

As early as 24 May 1940, in a memorandum about the transfer of national minorities and the adjustment of borders, Beneš offers the idea of an independent Slovakia and of a revived Czechoslovakia from which the German minority would be forcibly removed. The issue of the Hungarian minority should be solved either by a border change or by a forced exchange of inhabitants.

In December 1943 Stalin and Molotov promised Beneš their full support and Beneš even presented a memorandum to Stalin in which he speaks of the transfer of Hungarians (with which Moscow, unlike the British politicians in particular, at that time agreed). Czechoslovak opinion on a solution to the question of the nationalities in Czechoslovakia was not opposed to Soviet plans for Central Europe – which is to say, they did not conflict; on the contrary, they formed a platform on which the supporters of the First Republic and of a Masarykian Czechoslovakia could stand alongside the Communists.

Beneš's project of Czechoslovak–Soviet relations was a part of his whole foreign policy concept of a Czechoslovakia built on assumptions that were not fulfilled. The three load-bearing supports of his policy behaved differently to how their creators had supposed: 1. There was no long-term cooperation between the West and the East and the balance of their influence shaped itself as a division of spheres of influence and constitution of blocks; 2. The belief in a gradual process of democratization of Soviet power showed itself to be an illusion; 3. None of the Czechoslovak politicians believed in the possibility of an imminent democratic transformation and in the threat from Germany fading away.⁴⁰

In political terms, the liquidation of minorities was rationalized as reprisal for the collective guilt of the minorities in causing Czechoslovakia's catastrophe.

The deportation from 1945 to 1947 involved 2.5 million Germans, while 165,000 were allowed to stay in Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian

minority consisted of roughly half a million inhabitants primarily in the south of Slovakia, which was occupied by Hungary in 1938. In the case of Hungary 90,000 people were moved from Slovakia to Hungary and 70,000 in the opposite direction; in the end, because of the disapproval of the Western powers and a veto by Stalin, not as many Hungarians were deported as the Czechoslovak government had been aiming for. Eventually 368,000 inhabitants of Hungarian nationality remained in Czechoslovakia.⁴¹

A large part of the policy of “the negation of Munich” was not supported by the Western powers, but met rather with a hesitant and careful approach amounting almost to rejection. These reactions concerned the growing orientation of Czechoslovakia toward an alliance with the USSR and the efforts to build a postwar Czechoslovakia as a centralized unitarist state without minorities. The deportation of the Germans was widely supported internationally, but the Western powers never conceded that Czechoslovakia should take the same approach with the Hungarian minority. The Soviet Union on the other hand at first agreed fully with the policy of “the negation of Munich,” an attitude perceived by Beneš as significant support for Czechoslovakia. Thanks to this Soviet attitude, the Czechoslovakia Communist exiles in Moscow secured a dominant position in the course of forming postwar Czechoslovakia, in spite of the incontestable popularity and recognition of Edvard Beneš and his government as symbols of expanded ideas about the continuation of Masaryk’s Czechoslovakia.

Beneš never succeeded in obtaining international support for the expulsion of the Hungarian minority from Czechoslovakia.

The Prague government used almost every means to achieve its aim; as well as the attempt at transfer, it strove for an exchange of inhabitants, carried out an initial expulsion, and further “re-Slovakized” and carried out inner colonization. It did not, however, achieve its intention.⁴²

The repatriation of deported civilian inhabitants, primarily Slovak Hungarians, was a part of that policy, since the unauthorized return of deported civilians helped to lower the number of unwanted inhabitants.

Outside the circles of Czechoslovak exiles in London, attitudes toward the Hungarian inhabitants underwent a particular development. To start with, the Czechoslovak Communists did not include the Hungarian minority in the collective responsibility for the Czechoslovakia catastrophe, blaming it on the Germans alone. From February 1944, measures regard-

ing the Hungarians were discussed in Communist materials; nevertheless, they rarely clamored for the punishment of the Hungarians.

At the time of the Slovak National Uprising the Hungarian issue was marginal; the territory where the Hungarian population lived was outside the insurgent region. In its Manifesto of 4 February 1945 the Slovak National Committee announced that Hungarians who had arrived in occupied Slovak territory after 1938 with accreditation from the Hungarian government must return to Hungary; in the case of other inhabitants of Hungarian nationality, it would depend on their attitude toward the new Czechoslovakia.⁴³ Their attitude would be demonstrated, for example, by purging Fascist and anti-Slav elements. Hungarian nationals had to reintegrate into Slovak national life.

Gustáv Husák, Communist and leading representative of the SNR, was in Moscow at the beginning of February 1945, negotiating with the KSČ about the Party's work in the liberated territory. When he appeared at the KSS conference held in Košice from 28 February to 1 March 1945 with a contribution in which he dealt with the relationship with the Hungarians, he focused not on the mass transfer of Hungarians but on cooperation with the democratic powers and winning over minorities for the next republic. However, when talks opened in Moscow on 22 March 1945, the theme was that Germans and Hungarians with the exception of anti-Fascists would be relieved of their Czechoslovak citizenship. It is clear that during March there was a radical reversal in the approach toward the Hungarian minority. My impression is that this came about after the SNR and the Communists in Slovakia became aware of the attitude of the London government, and believed they would lose political capital if they did not emphatically support this approach to the minorities, or if they distanced themselves from it. By the time of the Moscow negotiations of 22-29 March 1945, the Communists were well prepared and had an advantage based largely on the fact that they came with a prepared proposal which required only a reaction from the democratic politicians. This superiority demonstrated itself in the outcome of the negotiations, which granted the Communist Party seven chairs in the government, and the post of prime minister to the pro-Moscow Social Democrat Zdeněk Fierlinger who supported the Communists. The other parties were represented only in threes and fours, with five independents.

The possibility of using German forced labor to satisfy wartime reparations was stated officially for the first time at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. Churchill proposed a discussion on the issue at the second plenary sitting on 5 February 1945, but Stalin countered by saying that he

gave priority to issues of reparation. Roosevelt agreed, saying that the reparation issue had two sides. On the one hand, small states like Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands also wanted reparation from Germany; on the other, there was the question of German forced labor. In the Soviet minutes from Yalta, it is recorded that Roosevelt asked how large a labor force the Soviet Union wanted, saying that the United States needed neither German machines nor German labor. In the American minutes, however, we read that what Roosevelt said was: "on the one hand, there is the question of Russia wanting to use German forced labor." To which Stalin replied that the Soviet Union had a plan for material reparation, but was not yet prepared to negotiate the issue of the German forced labor.⁴⁴ In the closing communiqué this appears as follows: "*Deutschland zur Wiedergutmachung dieser Verluste in Form von Naturalleistungen in größtmögliche Umfang zu verpflichten*" (to commit Germany for reparation of the losses in the form of payments in natural performance in the greatest possible extent).⁴⁵

The minute of the conference concerning reparations states that reparations will be taken from Germany in three forms: as confiscation of national property; as annual supplies of goods; and in the use of forced labor.

The notes from the Yalta Conference on this issue are very scanty. However, my impression is that even though Roosevelt was the first to mention the use of German forced labor, his question must have had some sort of lead-in, because he refers to the Soviets wanting to use German forced labor. Stalin's statement that the Soviet government is not ready for negotiations can be considered only as hypocrisy and lies. The Soviet Union had passed a decree about the deportation of the German population a long time ago, and in February 1945, when the Yalta Conference was taking place, there were mass deportations going on in Slovakia, Hungary and elsewhere, the Soviet authorities treating the local population in the same way as they treated the German population.

The deportation of Hungarians and the process of transfer started as soon as the Red Army arrived in southern Slovakia. According to Vnuk, the Košice governmental program was "unusually cruel and anti-democratic in denying basic human rights."⁴⁶ Vnuk said that the 8th chapter of the program: "by applying the principle of collective guilt, punished all Hungarian and German citizens, ignored their civil rights and condemned them to forced deportation. This discriminatory treatment related to 23% of the population."⁴⁷

According to Karel Kaplan, the Czechoslovak government prepared mass deportations of Hungarians from April 1945, but the unrestrained

expulsion of Hungarians began from the moment the Red Army entered southern Slovakia. Kaplan adds that the expulsion ran with the knowledge of the government and of political players as an act of national revenge, and as the beginning of a mass deportation; there was much evidence that the deportation, which included expulsion prepared and carried out by organs of the Red Army, took place on the initiative of the government and political players. Kaplan writes that the government players anticipated expulsion to a greater degree than eventually took place. However, there is no direct proof which would throw light on this.⁴⁸

On 12 April 1945, based on a decision of the SNR, all citizens of Hungarian nationality were dismissed from state and public employment, and the Czechoslovak government prepared for the mass deportation of Hungarians. On 2 August 1945 President Beneš signed Constitutional Decree no. 33 concerning the definition of Czechoslovak citizenship for persons of German and Hungarian nationality, by which all citizens of German and Hungarian minorities, apart from active anti-Fascists, were stripped of citizenship.⁴⁹

The principle of collective guilt was a powerful instrument for postwar Czechoslovakia to rid itself of all minorities considered unwanted. I completely agree with Kaplan when he says that the principle of collective guilt is unjust regardless of the form in which it is carried out, because it does not respect the generally acknowledged existence of numerous groups of citizens who are politically passive and without political interests, and does not take into consideration the mental process experienced by each layer of inhabitants on the basis of their own experience. The implementation of this practice automatically engendered negative results; citizens of German and Hungarian nationality became inhabitants without rights and found themselves outside the law.⁵⁰

Edvard Beneš also considered political and legal punishments for the Slovaks. In March 1943 he said that at the end of the war Slovakia would belong to the camp of the defeated.⁵¹ Several authors concerned with Czechoslovak–Soviet and Czech–Slovak relations during World War II say that Edvard Beneš, after signing the Czechoslovak–Soviet Friendship Treaty on 16 December 1943, asked Vyacheslav Molotov for the Soviet Union to put pressure on the Czechoslovak government and challenge it to call for the strictest punishment for those responsible for declaring war and collaborating with the Germans. Beneš is said to have stated that it would be better if the Slovaks were punished by the Soviets and not by the Czechs. Robert Letz considers that by saying this, Beneš essentially gave the Soviets a free hand in Slovakia.⁵²

Retribution and purges in Slovakia were later embodied by SNR Directive no. 33 of 15 May 1945 “concerning the punishment of Fascist criminals, occupiers, traitors and collaborators and concerning the construction of the people’s judiciary.” Syrný⁵³ shows that the Slovak Communists had a strong influence in the acceptance of this directive, having tried to implement a more radical and revolutionary retribution norm than in Bohemia and Moravia. This norm was extremely vague and extremely strict, for in essence it could trap almost every state and public employee, and in a broad measure embodied the death penalty. According to Syrný, in the course of its implementation the Democratic Party advocated a large representation of lawyers in the people’s courts, while the Communists strove for the maximum laicization. Syrný writes that the people’s courts moderated the punishment of persons sentenced by the retribution courts to a considerable degree and often invoked §6, reducing punishment for those who participated in the resistance and appealing to the human factor; however, there were sharp confrontations with Communists who strove for radical and revolutionary retribution without legal limits. Syrný records that 40% were sentenced and 60% freed; however, 70% of the sentenced were Hungarians and Germans, so political reprisal had a predominantly national aspect. It is, however, impossible to avoid noting a number of negative phenomena manifested at this time, ranging from lack of objectivity, amateurishness, bribery, corruption and fraud to envy, denunciation and the settling of accounts.

On 6 October 1944 the soldiers of the 4th Ukrainian Front of General Andrey Ivanovich Yeremenko, including the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps, had entered eastern Slovakia and advanced through the country. Operating alongside the Red Army was the dreaded SMERSH (short for *Smert’ Shpionam*, or Death to Spies). I mention briefly a few basic facts. After Germany’s attack on the USSR, the NKGB and NKVD combined on 30 July 1941 under the unified heading of the NKVD. It was at this time that Lavrentiy Beria forced through his ideas concerned with “the mobilization of the Gulags, their adaptation to wartime production, the securing of the transports and examples of unaccustomed self-sacrifice and fanaticism.”⁵⁴

The NKVD numbered around 750,000 and its units had an elite nature. In April 1943 a special department of the NKVD was extracted from the Soviet Army and turned into an independent anti-espionage organizational unit of SMERSH, in this way creating a unified anti-espionage head office. Viktor Semyonovich Abakumov (real name: Aba Kum) was put at the head of SMERSH. The number of members of SMERSH in each army headquarters did not exceed one hundred.

SMERSH, headed by General Kovalchuk and operating on the 4th Ukrainian Front, was in the weeks after the advance into Slovakia responsible for most of the deportations of the civil population. These deportations were primarily the task of the 2nd (operational) Department, which was headed by Lt. Col. Shabalin and his deputy Lt. Col. Dushnik. A three-man military tribunal was formed from the members of the 5th Department of SMERSH and was responsible for sentencing.⁵⁵ SMERSH had its seat in the court building in Košice in January 1945. According to Letz, Defense Intelligence (Obranné zpravodajství, OBZ), established through the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in January 1945 on the instigation of General Lev Zakharovich Mekhlis, played a particular role in the arrests and deportations.⁵⁶

On 14 November 1944 the government in exile in London announced that Czechoslovakia, as a victim of Hungarian aggression, had a special interest in the conditions which would be put to Hungary, and that the attitude of Czechoslovakia to Germany and to Hungary was the same.⁵⁷ An agreement about a truce with Hungary was signed in the name of the Allies on 20 January 1945 by Marshall Kliment Voroshilov of the USSR. In it, Hungary bound itself to withdraw from the territory of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania occupied on 31 December 1937, and the Vienna arbitration would be announced as invalid.

3. Citizenship in Postwar Czechoslovakia and the Decrees of President Beneš⁵⁸

The decree concerning citizenship of the Reich, referring to the Reich Act of 15 September 1935, p. 1146, paragraph 2, stated that: "Only a citizen of German or related blood who by his/her behavior demonstrates that he/she is willing and qualified faithfully to serve the German nation and Reich can be a citizen of the Reich."⁵⁹

On 16 March 1939 Hitler issued a decree about the system of government of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Germans living in the Protectorate became German citizens of the Reich. Other inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia became citizens of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

The Košice government program was announced on 5 April 1945. Chapter 8 formulated the relationship to the German minority which emerged from the principle of "the negation of Munich":

The Republic does not want and will not punish loyal German and Hungarian citizens and especially not those who in the worst times maintained loyalty toward it; toward the guilty, however, it will be strict and implacable as is required by the conscience of our nations . . . peace, and the security of future generations. . . . Of the citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic of German and Hungarian nationality who held Czechoslovak citizenship before Munich 1938, citizenship will be confirmed, and return to the Republic ensured, for anti-Nazis and anti-Fascists, for those who before Munich pursued an active struggle against [Konrad] Henlein and against Hungarian irredentist parties and on behalf of the Czechoslovak Republic, who . . . were persecuted . . . or who had to flee over the borders in the face of the German and Hungarian terror, and there took part in an active struggle for the liberation of Czechoslovakia. Citizenship will be withdrawn in the case of other Czechoslovak citizens of German and Hungarian nationality. These citizens can reapply for Czechoslovak citizenship, in the course of which the offices of the Republic will reserve the right to an individual decision about each request.

This declaration was carried out by decrees of the president of the Republic, which were later subject to ratification by the Provisional National Assembly. Constitutional Decree no. 33 Coll. of 2 August 1945, which is the one that concerns us above all, deals with the definition of Czechoslovak citizenship for persons of German and Hungarian nationality. This decree was issued with regard to the proposal by the government and after agreement with the Slovak National Council. The details of the decree were modified by Directive no. 51 Coll. of 25 August 1945 of the minister of the interior and Memorandum no. A-4600-/16/18-45 ref. A of 24 August 1945 of the minister of the interior about the revision of Czechoslovak nationality according to Decree no. 33/1945 Coll. The memorandum contained detailed guidelines as to the next approach, and determined the groups of people who were considered to be anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist.

Similar criteria were part of the Decree of the President of the Republic no. 12 of 21 June 1945, concerning the confiscation and speeding up of the division of German and Hungarian property as well as of traitors and enemies of the Czech and Slovak nation, effective in the Czech Lands only. In Slovakia the SNR's revision of no. 104 of 23 August 1945 was valid. As far as confiscation, nationalization or the appointment of a national administration to property belonging to persons of German and Hungarian nationality, the sanction did not apply to anyone who could show they had fulfilled the conditions for maintaining Czechoslovak citizenship.

Václav Pavlíček explains the legal essence of this regulation thus:

The decree derived from the position that Czechoslovak citizenship had continued through the war in the form it had existed before Munich. All contracts and acts of other states in the matter of citizenship were invalid, including contracts with Germany. It was not until this constitutional decree came into force that Czechoslovakia

discharged *ex lege* from the Czechoslovak state alliance all persons of German or Hungarian nationality whom the occupying German and Hungarian regimes declared to be their nationals. Through this constitutional decree, the situation considered by the occupying states from the viewpoint of their own rule of law to be valid was also recognized by the Czechoslovak legal order up to the day it came into force. In that way the mass naturalization of nationals of one state by another came about with the agreement of what was up to then the home state. From Germany's side, as a naturalizing state, these were in particular the contract of citizenship and option of 20 November 1938 (Reich Act II, p. 895) with a view to the Czechoslovak Republic; further, article 2, paragraph 1, of Hitler's ordinance of 16 March 1939 concerning the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (Reich Act I, p. 485); and the directive of the minister of the interior of the Reich of 20 April 1939 about the acquisition of German citizenship by former Czechoslovak citizens of German nationality (Reich Act I, p. 815), the directive of the minister of the interior of the Reich of 6 June 1941, amending issues of citizenship with a view to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (Reich Act I, p. 308), and some other provisions concerning Těšín and other territory. Persons who retained their Czechoslovak citizenship were not affected by these measures.⁶⁰

As a result of the decrees and the transfer, Germans who had lost their Czechoslovak citizenship remained in Czechoslovakia alongside Germans with Czechoslovak citizenship. Their position was definitively resolved by Act no. 34/1953 Coll., while the citizenship of Hungarians was already resolved by Act no. 245/1948 Coll.⁶¹

Decree no. 5 of 19 May 1945 about the appointment of the national administration of the property of persons judged to be unreliable by the state related to all persons of German and Hungarian nationality without exception.

Decree no. 12 of 21 June 1945 concerned the confiscation and accelerated division of the agricultural property of Germans and Hungarians and of traitors and enemies of the Czech and Slovak nation. On the basis of this decree, immediate confiscation of the agricultural property of persons of German and Hungarian nationality without compensation was to take place without regard to their citizenship, while the property of Germans and Hungarians who had actively participated in the struggle to maintain the integrity of the Czechoslovak Republic and its liberation was not to be confiscated.

The Decree of the President of the Republic no. 28 of 20 July 1945 about the settlement of agricultural land took care of the reemigrants – Czech farmers from Transcarpathian Ukraine and from Slovakia. The condition for acquiring land was not citizenship but membership of the Czech or Slovak nation, or another Slavonic nation. These two decrees were applicable only in the Czech Lands.

Pavlíček argues that it was not a question of collective guilt, because persons who (according to §1 of Constitutional Act no. 33 Coll. of 2 August 1945) had lost their state citizenship, were able, within a period of six months, to request the return of this citizenship.

In principle this was not about enforcing collective responsibility with a view to the national citizenship of certain people; it was about individual responsibility, ascertained according to criteria contained in the decrees. Persons of German and Hungarian nationality were considered to be unreliable with a view to the state, as were persons who carried out any activity against state sovereignty, independence, integrity, the democratic and republican form of the state or the security and defense of the Czechoslovak Republic, or who instigated such activity, or who sought to seduce other people and who deliberately supported the German and Hungarian occupiers in any way.⁶²

I do think, however, that there was an inclination toward collective guilt in the content of this decree. The criterion for citizenship was to demonstrate loyalty to the Czechoslovak state in ways which had to fit into literally specified categories.

Czechoslovak policy counted on the punishment of almost four million people, that is, almost one-third of the population. It rejected another solution, which was to strengthen democratic trends in the ranks of the German and Hungarian minorities and to work with them to strengthen democratic revival and development. The idea of the national state was in the end accepted by all the political tendencies of the Czech and Slovak resistance at home and abroad, and after the war was one of the most important programmed maxims of all political parties and individuals.⁶³

The “presumption of innocence” was not valid, since all inhabitants of German and Hungarian nationality were considered en bloc to be traitors and enemies of Czechoslovakia. The only ones able to extricate themselves from this stigma and to remain in a state on whose territory their family had, in many cases, lived for centuries, were those who could show documentation proving their active involvement in the resistance or demonstrable persecution on the side of the German or Hungarian forces. Few of them were able to provide such documentation. I agree with Karel Kaplan that these decrees completely ignored the politically passive population. This requirement for active resistance caused considerable hardship for these people:

The idea of the collective guilt of the Germans, Hungarians and their minorities developed into a principle of state policy through which the relationship of the government, authorities and persons to citizens of German and Hungarian nationality was conducted.⁶⁴

One can even speculate whether the feverish effort to show one's utility in the resistance did not goad many inhabitants to inform on their neighbors to the Soviet authorities. Such denunciations increased after the arrival of the Red Army on Czechoslovak territory. A number of written sources draw attention to it, as does the oral evidence gathered by this author during her research.

I. DEPORTATIONS FROM SLOVAKIA

On 8 May 1944 Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union signed a treaty concerning the relationship between the Czechoslovak administration and the Supreme Command of the Red Army on the territory of Czechoslovakia in the course of its liberation. According to this treaty, immediately after military operations had been concluded all power had to be in the hands of the Czechoslovak authorities. Paragraph 7 of this treaty stated that civilians had to submit to Czechoslovak jurisdiction, even in the cases of crimes against Soviet troops.⁶⁵

After the signing of this treaty, various supplementary provisions were still being debated. On 27 September 1944 a *pamyatnaya zapiska* (memorandum) was being formulated by the Soviet side.⁶⁶ The Soviets emphasized above all that the treaty should not relate to Soviet citizens found on Czechoslovak territory not occupied by Soviet troops, nor to the repatriation of citizens of foreign states, because these must be the subject of special treaties. The Soviet memorandum even wanted a statement that the repatriation authorities of foreign states would not be permitted on a certain part of Czechoslovak territory. This memorandum proposed that the provisions concerning which part of Czechoslovak territory, and for how long, should be the subject of a special agreement between the Czechoslovak government and Soviet Supreme Command. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepted the Soviet memorandum, but ensured that the term “territory occupied by the Red Army” referred to the area of military operations.

After the arrival of the Red Army on Czechoslovak territory, the treaty of 8 May 1944 was not respected and its provisions were broken. As the Red Army gradually advanced westwards through Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovak citizens were captured and deported to the Soviet Union. Czechoslovak diplomats frequently appealed to § 7 of the treaty in an

effort to force the Soviet side to release deported Czechoslovak civilians. Writers on this subject often cite this paragraph as proof of the Soviet Union's failure to keep to treaties, and of how it broke the law and transgressed on the sovereignty of an allied state.⁶⁷ Some think⁶⁸ that according to the treaty of 8 May 1944 the front reached as far as seventy kilometer under the remit of the Red Army, and it was only beyond this band that the political administration of the Czechoslovak Republic could operate. I have not, however, been able to find any provision about a seventy-kilometer band.

The main wave of deportations took place with great intensity in the east and south-east of Slovakia, chiefly in January, February and March 1945, and in Prague in May and June 1945. However, deportations did take place later, even weeks and in some cases months after the arrival of the Red Army, and there were also deportations from other parts of Czechoslovakia.

1. Circumstances of Deportation

Decisions made at the highest soviet levels about deportations

The Soviet deportations of Czechoslovak civilians were major operations. Hundreds of people from villages, towns and cities were forcibly apprehended, subjected to quasi-court proceedings, and moved on to collection points where thousands were already interned. From there they were transported to the Soviet Union, where they were distributed to designated places as a labor force—for the most part to the mines in the Donbas, but also to the Caucasus, Siberia, beyond the Arctic Circle and many other places. Deportations on such a scale must have been the subject of proposals, decisions and approvals; they had to be managed and checked, and somebody must have been responsible for them. A large number of people of every rank must have ensured they were carried out. This gigantic operation must have had its rationale at the highest levels of the Soviet powers, and this rationale must have been worked out as instructions transferred to a lower level of decision making, and so step by step to the level of the ordinary soldiers of the Red Army.

The deportations of civilians were undoubtedly planned and approved at the highest level of the Soviet authorities. On 16 December 1944 the "Proekt postanovleniya GKO SSSR o likvidatsii i internirovanii lits nemetskoy natsional'nosti dlya raboty v SSSR, nakhodyashchikhsya na

teritorii Rumynii, Yugoslavii, Bolgarii i Chekhoslovakii” (Resolution Project of the State Commissariat of Defense Regarding the Liquidation and Internment of Persons of German Nationality for Work in the USSR, Finding Themselves in the Territory of Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia”) was submitted to Stalin.⁶⁹ The deportations should have been a means of obtaining a labor force and simultaneously carrying out an act of retribution. Retribution was clearly a strong motive, even though it was only rarely acknowledged⁷⁰ and is difficult to prove. Many historians and political scientists relegate retribution to the category of an emotion perhaps felt by some people, but which could not have been taken into consideration during serious political decision making. It seems that the Czechoslovak government was in the dark about what was really happening, and the true reason for it. I would even suggest that through all the years of the deportations, and when repatriations were being negotiated at political and diplomatic levels, not only did the true reason never cross anyone’s lips, but the precisely formulated question was never asked.

It would seem that the Soviet Union had, from its own point of view, justification for the deportations in the immediate postwar period. After the Communist takeover in February 1948, Czechoslovakia was a loyal member of the Soviet bloc with Communist justice on the Soviet model, Soviet advisers, and its own camps, but there are clear traces that deportations to the Gulag camps continued. The issue of deportation after February 1948 is so far veiled in darkness. I hope that the question of post-1948 deportations will be clarified in the future; meanwhile, for context, I would like to mention a case I came across.

Vladimír Juskiv and Stanislav Jurko were held by the StB (Czechoslovak secret police) in Košice in 1949 and taken from there to the infamous seat of the StB in Bartolomějská Street in Prague. According to them, they were handed over during the night to an agent of the MGB (Soviet Ministry of State Security) and transported via Lvov, Kiev and Moscow to Siberia where, via Irkutsk, they reached the camp in Kolyma beyond the Arctic Circle. What was known as a “troika” of the NKVD sentenced them to ten years in the camp for “having connections with the international bourgeoisie.” The two men were not rescued until September 1955, when they were allowed to return home. They did not reach Czechoslovakia until 1956. As victims of Stalin’s repression they were fully rehabilitated after 1990 by a decision of the Supreme Court of the USSR.⁷¹

Camps

According to some estimates, citizens of Czechoslovakia were held in approximately seventy camps in the Soviet Union. Štefan Pazdera⁷² of the Prešov Committee of the Confederation of Political Prisoners (KPV), one of the pioneers in gathering documentation of deportations from Czechoslovakia, came to this conclusion in the first half of the 1990s. The prisoners had been deported from Czechoslovakia, and then taken to camps in a network which stretched from the furthest points of the Arctic Circle to the deserts of Central Asia, from the Ukraine in the West (even places close to the Czechoslovak borders) to the Far East. However, most of the deported Czechoslovaks were located in approximately two dozen camps, the largest concentration being in the Donbas and the Caucasus. For the most part these were forced labor camps where the interned were set to work in the mines, on construction sites, in industry, in the forests and in agriculture.

The following camps are referred to in the written sources of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Czechoslovak deportees themselves. The names of the camps and their locations were often recorded imprecisely or approximately, or in a distorted form. Frequently a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian was used, with Russian prevailing even for camps in Ukraine. In the following list I have left the names of the camps as they appear in the sources. Where possible, I have given the current name of the locality in brackets, first in Russian and then, where relevant, in Ukrainian. For the sake of the historical context, where the names of the camps appear in the text they are given only in Russian. Russian BGN/PCGN romanization system was used in this book.

Alagir, North Ossetia

Alagir, no. 228

Altynai near Artyomovsky (previously: Yegorshino), Sverdlovsk Oblast (province)

Asbest 84/1, Sverdlovsk Oblast

Arkhangelsk

Baidakievka, Siberia

Borovka

Boris

Bulanash, Artyomovsky district, Sverdlovsk Oblast

Cherepovets no. 437, Vologda Oblast

Cherepovets, Vologda Oblast

Donbas, Yenakievo (current name: Yenakiyeve), camp no. 242/6b

Donbas, camp no. 240/6b
Donbas, Almaznaya (current name: Almazna)
Donbas, Makeevka (current name: Makiyivka)
Dzauzhikau (current name: Vladikavkaz), North Ossetia
Dzauzhikau, camp A-228/50
Elgen near Magadan
Galon no. 228/1084, Dzauzhikau area, Caucasus
Gorlovka, Orlovka, Horlivka (Ukrainian Horlivka, near Yenakievo)
Ivotokhov-Detkon
Karakash no. 11, Voroshilovgrad (currently Luhansk) region
Kemerovo, Kemerovo Oblast
Kishinev (currently Chişinău)
Komisarovo near Smolensk
Krasnaya Gorka, camp no. 525, Prokopsk, Siberia
Kuzbas
Leg. Lag. Kola III
Luisdorf, also known as Luizanovka, repatriation camp (currently Luzanovka)
Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast
Molotovsk (current name: Severodvinsk) near the White Sea
Murmansk
Nizhne-Amursky camp, Komsomolsk district, Khabarovsk Oblast
Norilsk, near the Yenisei River
Novosibirsk, Pervomaisky (previously: Inskoy) district
Novocherkassk
Novoshakhtinsk
Nový Targ (Nowy Targ, Poland)
Nuzalag in the Caucasus
Camp Nuzal no. 228, North Ossetia, Tiflis
(There is some imprecision here: Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, was renamed Tbilisi in 1936, but North Ossetia was never part of Georgia, only of Russia. South Ossetia was indeed part of Georgia, but the town of Nuzal is in North Ossetia, and not in the Tiflis [Tbilisi] region. This is one of the examples where the information possessed by the Czechoslovaks was often very approximate.)
Nuzal-lag 228/4b
Odessa (current name: Odesa)
Ordzhonikidze, camp no. 228
(Here again this locality is not clearly defined. From 1931 to 1944 and from 1954 to 1990 this was the name of the capital of North

Ossetia, today known Vladikavkaz. However, from 1944 to 1954 the city was known as Dzaudzhikau. Other cities in the USSR have been called Ordzhonikidze, for example, the Ukrainian city of Jenakieve; however, in this case only from 1937 to 1943, i.e., outside the time span of this book. However, the only Ordzhonikidze in the Caucasus is Dzaudzhikau [Vladikavkaz]).

Orsha-Vitebsk

Ozerlag in the Irkutsk region near the city of Taishet

Polovinka, North Urals, Molotov (currently Perm) Oblast

Potma, Mordovian ASSR (sometimes given as a repatriation camp)

Rezh near Artyomovsky, Sverdlovsk Oblast

Rudniki, Yenakievo district, Stalino region, camp no. 14 (*rudnik* is a Russian word meaning “mine” or “mine camp”)

Sadon, Sadon Rudnik, Caucasus (in North Ossetia)

Shakhtigorod

Shteblov no. 100/3, Novosibirsk Oblast

Siberian *zemianka* (woman’s) camp, Klinbursk, Stalino region

Snezhoe (current name: Snizhne), Stalino district, camp no. 21

Solgament camp no. 35/b near Omsk

Stalino/Staline (current name: Donetsk)

Stalino, camp no. 13

Stonuya, Kesharov region (it has not been possible to ascertain the locality)

Stryi, Khodorov (current name: Khodoriv), Drogobych (current name: Drohobych) region, camp 232, Ukrainian SSR

Tomsk Oblast

Vologda

Yagrinlag (Severodvinsk)

Yenakievo (current name: Yenakieve), Stalino district, Donbas, Yunkom mine 242/6b.

(The name Yunkom is probably derived from the Russian for “young” and “Communist.”)

Yenakievo, Stalino district, Donbas, Gorlovka (current name: Horlivka), camp no. 242/6b (Gorlovka near Stalino, camp no. 23

Yenakievo, camp no. 14

Zgid no. 228/1087, Dzaudzhikau area, Caucasus, North Ossetia

This list consists only of camps which appear in the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry’s documents or are remembered by those who were once interned there. There may be more camps where Czechoslovak citizens

were held, as there were an incredible number of camps for forced labor. The lists of many camps, more or less complex, have been published by other authors.⁷³ Usually one finds a large number of camps in one locality. According to the deportees themselves, there were several hundred camps listed by number in the Donbas.

Red Army Procedures in Interning Civilians

Former deportees, even many years later, are able to give a precise description of the circumstances under which they were held and deported. Their recollections are evidence of what an indelible imprint these events left on the memory. Amazingly detailed descriptions of the last evening with their family, what the deportees were doing before their deportation, detailed descriptions of the places they were held in the first days after their internment, how the Soviet officers, soldiers and investigators behaved, what they looked like, what they were called, how many days they spent in places they passed through before they set out for the Soviet Union, where exactly the journey took them in the first few days after being held, what they were wearing and what they got to eat demonstrate that in that time of shock these people had exceptionally sharpened senses; they were obviously in a panic, uncertain and anxious about what would happen to them and when they would return. Everything was perceived in great detail and their first impressions engraved deeply in their memory. Later, when deportees had arrived at the camp where they were destined to spend their next years, their memories become more condensed, their thoughts run together and focus on the main issue—how to survive. From a sharpened perception of their surroundings they often move to a concentration on themselves and their struggle to survive. This perception may be connected with a deeper phenomenon described by Hannah Arendt in her essay on concentration camps, which is mainly about the Nazi camps but has a general validity. According to Arendt, concentration camps are the most consistent institution of totalitarian regimes, but neither memories nor information from eyewitnesses can really help to an understanding of them. There is a flight from the experience undergone, either from instinct or from reason. The authors of memoirs and eye witnesses being interviewed are, according to Arendt, too well aware of “the terrible abyss which divides the world of the living from the world of the dead,” so they cannot offer more than incidents they remember and which must seem incredible both to themselves and to their readers and listeners.⁷⁴

Most of the survivors describe the beginning of their deportation in great detail. The men were called to a certain place to take part in voluntary work for a few days. Usually this was to involve the repair of the local communication network damaged by the war, so that the Red Army could continue its advance. The men reacted to this command in a disciplined way, some more enthusiastically than others, but for the most part without any suspicion of an ulterior motive behind the command. The command was often relayed through the local Slovak administration so it seemed perfectly reliable and gave the impression of cooperation between the liberators and the liberated. However, witnesses agree that as soon as the men were in a certain place—usually a selected house in the village, a school or somewhere similar—they immediately began to be treated as captives. The building was surrounded by soldiers of the Red Army with weapons at the ready; none of those held were allowed to leave the building and no one from outside, neither wife nor parent, was allowed to approach and communicate with those within.

Russian soldiers arrived on the given day and announced that they needed people for two days to repair communications, so they could supply the locality. The inhabitants believed them and collected at the Culture House. My father was with them. They didn't allow them out again, they were guarded by soldiers with firearms. Inside there were 180 guys aged from sixteen to sixty. The transport took them away like prisoners, surrounded by soldiers with firearms. They didn't take them to work but, so we learned, to Russia.⁷⁵

In Matejovce pri Poprade all the men aged from eighteen to fifty working in the local factory were called up for three days of work. In the parish of Veľký Blh all the inhabitants aged sixteen to fifty, including the women, were called up for two days clearance work. In the parish of Hrhov near Rožňava men over eighteen were drummed up with orders to bring provisions for three days. In Chmeľnica near Stará Ľubovňa, the pretext for the deportation was three days to be spent repairing bridges in the locality. In the parish of Drienovce in the Moldava district four men were taken by the Red Army under the excuse of helping “in defense works” [sic]. They went willingly, thinking they were going to be of assistance, but ended in the Donbas, in one of the Stalino camps. In spite of repeated interventions up to 1949 all four were still missing in 1950. They were lucky to survive, being in the end taken to Frankfurt an der Oder, which was a repatriation camp intended largely for Germans. One of the four was Alexandr Varga (b. 1925), only twenty when he went willingly to help.⁷⁶ His namesake Gabriel Varga, only seventeen years old, was

taken from Vinička parish in the district of Kráľovský Chlmec for three days work in the locality and disappeared for long years into the Soviet Union. He was still not home in 1949, but it was known that he was in camp no. 7.280/10.300.⁷⁷ Ján Vajó, born 8 November 1919, was taken away allegedly for reconstruction work; he was not given the usual three-day excuse but told it was for a month's work. He had still not returned in 1950, even though it was known where he was, as the number of his camp was given in the documents.⁷⁸

The excuse of three days help in repairing bridges, railways and roads destroyed during the war was frequently used throughout Slovakia. I often heard of it as I interviewed survivors. There were cases where a bridge really was repaired, so it seems that this was true at the beginning, but that subsequently the same reason was used for the deportations. For example, Mr. Majkút from Dolný Kubín in Orava took his team of oxen to help with the repair of a bridge. But only the oxen returned home, because Mr. Majkút ended on a transport to the Soviet Union.⁷⁹

There were other excuses. In the Medzev region where a German minority had been living since the Middle Ages, potential internees were lured to the Local National Committee with the promise of sugar coupons.⁸⁰

As Peter Juščák, an independent Slovak researcher, writes:

It was characteristic of Communist power that it used a primitive ruse for filling the cattle trucks and abused the natural efforts of the inhabitants to help repair their own country. Thousands of people were summoned to repair bridges, roads and railways. Simple and willing craftsmen, peasants and laborers gathered at the appointed places, many bringing their equipment with them.⁸¹

I have recorded only a few examples in this book, mainly those which have not been published elsewhere. A number of cases have been recorded by Peter Juščák,⁸² whose book I would like to refer to in this connection. It is plain that in the mass deportations of inhabitants the same scenario was often followed in widely separated Slovak localities. Why, however, was the apparently harmless excuse of a few days' work in the neighborhood used at all? I believe because it was the only sure way of gathering a large number of unresisting people in one place at the same time. The Soviet authorities could not announce publicly that all men and women aged from eighteen to sixty in the village should gather in one place for the purpose of working for several years in the Soviet Union. If we were to give our imagination full rein, an announcement that people

should volunteer for slave labor in the drastic conditions of the Soviet mines in the Donbas or the mines for nonferrous metals in the Caucasus or the most northern reaches of Siberia, places where bed and board would be taken care of by an institution called the Gulag, would be grim indeed.

On 22 February 1945 a proposal from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was placed before Stalin:

to decorate the members of the NKVD and the NKGB USSR and members of the troops of the NKVD who carried out the mobilization and internment of persons of German ethnicity on the territory of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.⁸³

In an appendix was information from the NKVD of the USSR about the large number of people proposed for decoration. In Czechoslovakia, President Beneš awarded the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class of the Order of the White Lion to twenty-two members of the NKVD. The reason given for the decorations was that

after the front had passed through the territory of Slovakia, a great service was carried out by members of the security departments of the police service of the NKVD. They took care of the speedy consolidation of conditions and by their rapid interventions disposed of the disturbers of order.⁸⁴

A number of people did not have a good feeling about the Red Army and feared what might come. In many places the Red Army had behaved aggressively and the end of military operations was marked by cases of robbery, rape and the killing of civilians. In some regions word spread from village to village that people were being taken away somewhere and that the Russians were guarding them with weapons in their hands as though they were prisoners. In some places the population was warned by the soldiers of General Svoboda's army and the radio broadcast sporadic warnings that people were being deported from the liberated territories. Here and there, however, people gathered willingly and reportedly there were cases where they came with the village band and in folk costume to celebrate their Slavonic brothers. Supposedly this happened in Levoča and in one of the villages in the Levoča area, but unfortunately I was unable to verify this information found in the press.⁸⁵ People gathered more or less willingly in a generally disciplined way at the determined places. I did not hear of any major effort to avoid the rounding up, to hide or to flee the village. This may partly have been because of the frequently heard threat that the families of those who did not obey would be pun-

ished. It was not easy to leave home right after the end of military operations, with the Red Army keeping a strict check on persons it came across on the highways. On the contrary, once military operations had come to an end most people did their best to get home and were not interested in fleeing anywhere. For some people this return home was fatal.

Another explanation is that even when people understood they were being transported to work in the Soviet Union, few of them realized the true horror of what was waiting for them. As a rule, people living in modest conditions and accustomed to strenuous physical work in the fields or to laboring were not afraid of hard work, especially when the Soviet soldiers came up with the legendary "You'll just work for a bit and then you'll go home." However, conditions during the first days of their transportation prepared them for the worst.

I found no proof that any Soviet soldier gave the slightest indication what the truth really was. I think even an ordinary Soviet soldier must have known that these were deportations to forced labor in the Gulag, and what the Gulag was. According to some of the evidence, it was only the soldiers of the First Czechoslovak Army Corps who tried to warn the inhabitants about the threat of the Gulag. This was the Czechoslovak Army abroad, formed in the USSR and fighting alongside the Red Army against Germany. It included some Czechoslovak citizens who had themselves been thrown in the Gulag after they had retreated to Soviet territory during the advance of the German Army in 1939, and who, by volunteering for Czechoslovak military units, saved themselves from the Gulag. There were even volunteers from the ranks of the Volhynian Czechs and from inhabitants of Sub-Carpathian Rus, which had been part of Czechoslovakia before WWII. These people not only had a positive attitude toward Czechoslovakia; they also had experience of the Gulag and knew what it was like.

As soon as the villagers were gathered, the soldiers' behavior changed and the men were escorted "under bayonets" like criminals. From that moment on, flight was almost impossible. We can also be certain that some people were weakened psychologically and physically by the internment and interrogations of the first days, by shock and by stress.

We now move from group internment to those interned individually. Written sources and the evidence of survivors refer to a great number of these cases. People were apprehended in their homes and carried straight off "in the middle of their dinner," or received a command, summons or invitation to present themselves at the office of the NKVD, at the Local National Committee or at another official place. These were mainly

people the Soviets had been tipped off about, whom they simply picked up. They were usually given veiled excuses—very often “to provide information,” “for a routine short interrogation,” “for registration on the list of men who did not serve at the front,” “for interpreting,” and so on. A number of people were captured at home or at work—soldiers of the Red Army came to a specific address and took away the person concerned or left an invitation or summons for them to present themselves at a certain place for some sort of unsuspecting operation.

For the most part people reacted to these summons in an honest and disciplined way, even when they were not free of anxiety. However, as soon as they crossed the threshold of the place to which they had been summoned (or requested) to attend, their position changed immediately. The Soviet organs—the Red Army and the NKVD—began to treat them as though they were criminals, and they were imprisoned in atrocious conditions; they were treated roughly and subjected to interrogation—often at night—when they were forced to confess to espionage. The Soviet organs conveniently forgot that the people interned for the most part did not understand Russian, or only very little, and were therefore incapable of arguing and defending themselves. As captives, they were forced to sign documents they did not understand about an interrogation or a sentence. From the legal point of view people were sentenced in a purely arbitrary way to punishments of ten to fifteen years in a labor camp in the Soviet Union; no evidence was given, the accused were not allowed a qualified defense, and were often not told what the charge was. According to the Czechoslovak–Soviet Treaty of 8 May 1944, they should not have been held by the Soviets at all, and should not have been interrogated or sentenced by them. However, in the first chapter of this study I noted that the zone of military operations was not demarcated in this treaty, which placed the jurisdiction of the Czechoslovak organs on shaky ground.

Whether abducted on the pretext of a few days of voluntary work repairing bridges or after a trial which ran in complete conflict with legal principles, thousands of people were thus concentrated in centers before being transported as slave labor in the camps of the Gulag.

There was another group of individuals subject to the arbitrary rule of the Soviet authorities. These were the victims of random and capricious arrests, often when traveling; they might be apprehended in the streets and squares of towns and cities, or when commuting from village to village, to or from work. In these cases one could say the person was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some of these randomly held individuals were subjected to a quasi-court hearing and sentenced to drastic punishments

for espionage or other activities on behalf of the enemy, without any conceivable reason. Such cases can best be attributed to the Beria principle: "You find the man, we'll find the guilt." Many were young people, some of them students, sent by their families to relatives to wait in safety for the front to pass their native village or town. Returning home after the fighting had died down, they were picked up on the road by the Red Army and sentenced mainly for espionage. That was what happened to František Čambal of Spišská Nová Ves, a secondary school student in Levoča. When the front was approaching, his parents sent him to safety in western Slovakia. On his way back he was held by the Soviet authorities in Žilina, and sentenced on the spot to fifteen years for espionage.⁸⁶

Sometimes the "cause" of the deportation is given on the list of deportees. For example, several lists of deportees from Spišská Nová Ves provide the range of reasons shown in Table 1.⁸⁷

Table 1: Reasons Given for Deportation

Cause	Number of Deportees
Unknown	118
Partisan	3
Soldier	39
Member of the Hlinka Guard	28
Member of the Hlinka Party	2
"Aryaniser" (confiscator of Jewish property)	3

It can be seen that most deportations were arbitrary, and it is difficult to find an answer as to why any particular person was selected and abducted. Several were noted as adherents of the pro-Hitler establishment of the Slovak Republic but even this should not have been a reason for deportation to the Soviet Union. In the requests of family members for the return of deportees, the reason given for deportation was often the personal revenge of neighbors, jealousy and slander. Survivors sometimes say that they know exactly who was informing on whom. This was definitely true in some cases; such behavior leaves its traces, especially as some informers and collaborators did not trouble to hide their role, openly demonstrating how hard they were willing to work for the Red Army and the NKVD.

Arguments given in support of repatriation help us to see the circumstances: for example, one person went to a Slovak school, another's chil-

dren attended Slovak schools; one speaks Czech, another wants to “re-Slovakize”; one has a Czech wife, another has a letter from the Czechoslovak Republic, and another opted for the Czechoslovak Republic; one man’s sister had been in Dachau (in this case a man with a German name from the Czech Lands, most probably a prisoner of war), another served in the Czechoslovak Army abroad (the case of Bruno Peroutka of Nový Bohumín, b. 1924, in the 3rd brigade in the USSR); one man devoted himself to his official duties and to his family as the father of two small children, another was reliable as far as nationalism and politics were concerned, and a third loyal to the Czechoslovak Republic (this person received a completely contrary evaluation in another document from the Local National Committee: politically unreliable). At the opposite end of the scale we come across one who “served the Gestapo”; and there was a case where one and the same person was the regional secretary of the Hlinka Guard and yet obtained a certificate for supporting the resistance.

On the whole, people were aware of the difference between officers of the Red Army and organs of the NKVD (SMERSH). The rounding-up of people and their deportation was carried out by both the Red Army and the NKVD, and the result was the same—there was no difference whether the deportation was initially organized by the NKVD or by the Red Army, both elements worked closely together. Nevertheless, the lists held by the Slovak authorities usually noted whether the list was of people arrested by the NKVD or by the Red Army.

The Social Impact of the Deportations

The Red Army told lies to people, abused their good will and instinct for discipline, and even the efforts of local administrative organs to cooperate. The Soviets effectively emptied several villages and small towns leaving only children, women, and old people; even so, a large number of girls and women were also deported. Particularly tragic were the deportations of the mothers of young children, far from isolated cases. Frequently the father of a poor family with a number of children was deported when his wife was pregnant, or looking after a baby and/or elderly parents. In these cases families remained completely without means, reliant on the help of neighbors and relatives.

For example, Katarína Bernátová’s argument for the return of her husband did not rely on the paragraphs of a treaty or on higher values, but was completely practical. The family, which lived in a village in the dis-

trict of Spišská Stará Ves, was threatened with starvation because Mrs. Bernátová could not work in the fields without her husband; it was necessary to sow and plough, and not only was it beyond her strength, she also had to look after the children, the youngest only two months old and still breast fed. Mrs. Bernátová's letter indicates the naked tragedy in which simple people in Slovakia were caught. She must have asked someone to write the letter because it is typewritten, which Mrs. Bernátová could scarcely have done herself; her signature, tremulous in a hand unaccustomed to writing, slightly corrected, points to a woman with little education and not used to writing letters. Most of the villagers were similarly poorly educated. The signatures of sixty neighbors were attached to Mrs. Bernátová's request and almost all show a heavy, toil-worn hand unaccustomed to holding a pen. Mrs. Bernátová openly writes that: "Those who made the accusation had had a row with him in the pub when they were all drunk and wanted to use this disgusting method to get their own back." That is confirmed by the enclosed statement from the Local National Committee:

Sometimes it happened that [Bernát] would get drunk and be a bit too free with his tongue; however, in a sober state his behavior was very good. The Local National Committee cannot cold-bloodedly look on the privations of his wife who remains defenseless with a family of five children, without the wherewithal to buy a crust of bread.⁸⁸

The employability of women in those times was minimal; there was no social backup for women with children who needed to work, and this made the tragic impact of the absence of breadwinners in families still worse. Because the deportations involved hundreds, even thousands, of families, a very serious social and economic problem emerged which the Czechoslovak diplomats repeatedly warned the Soviet side about, but their arguments had no influence on the situation, and the Soviet Union never considered a general release of deported Czechoslovak citizens. The Soviets were deaf to the arguments that their ally had social and economic, and consequently political, problems.

Prisoners of War

So far we have dealt mainly with deported civilians—the group which is the theme of this book: men who were not serving in any of the three armies—Slovak, Hungarian or German—and were either at home or about

their own business on their own territory when the Red Army advanced. However, to see the more complex picture we must deal at least briefly with the other groups who found themselves in the Gulag for other reasons, but who shared a common fate with the civilians, a common repatriation, and common problems after returning to their country.

One very numerous group consisted of prisoners of war, former members of the Slovak, Hungarian and German armies who fell into the hands of the Red Army. The Soviets captured around 70,000 originally from Czechoslovak territory, 4,000 of whom died in captivity.⁸⁹ References to prisoners of war in this work occur only in the context of their repatriation. There is a third group, on the borderline of the two already mentioned.

On the basis of the Vienna Award of November 1938, southern Slovakia, with a large Hungarian population, was awarded to Hungary, and Hungary won further territory from Slovakia in March 1939. The Slovak Republic and Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union in 1941, but there was a big difference in the extent of military involvement. Slovakia called to arms only two year groups, and only two divisions were engaged on the Eastern front: the Slovak Fast Division (also known as the 1st Slovak [Mobile] Infantry Division) and the 2nd Slovak (Security) Infantry Division, each consisting of about 5,000 men. About one-third of the Fast Division deserted to the Red Army and the partisans. The (Security) Infantry Division functioned in the rear, and at the end of the war one regiment was in Italy while two were in Romania and partially in Hungary. After the Uprising the Germans disarmed these troops and used them primarily for various land-based works, so that the Slovak armed forces in fact ceased to exist and the home defense created in September 1944 was very small.

In comparison, Hungary called to arms twenty year groups against the Soviet Union and after the announcement of general mobilization all men aged seventeen to sixty had to join up. This also applied to territory which from 1919 to 1938 had belonged to Slovakia and was now part of Hungary. Not only Hungarians but also Slovaks living in this territory had to join up—some of them from villages which had mixed populations and others from purely Slovak villages. There were two Hungarian armies, each of six to eight divisions involving around 200,000 men fighting on the Eastern front. Tens of thousands of soldiers from the Hungarian Army were captured by the Red Army. It is estimated that in southern Slovakia around 30,000 were called up, of whom around 25,000 returned.

The Slovak historian Ladislav Boroň argued that according to the Hague Conventions and the Geneva Convention of 1929 concerning the treatment of prisoners of war, the Red Army had:

the right to take into captivity persons belonging to the armed powers of the warring side whose territory they had occupied if the occupying side [the Soviets] considered it necessary to intern them to prevent members of the enemy armed forces from taking part in hostile acts.⁹⁰

It follows from this that the Red Army took soldiers of the Hungarian Army into captivity in conformity with the rules of war. However, I believe that Boroň's starting point is completely wrong, because the Soviet Union was not a signatory of the Geneva Convention in 1929, and so was not bound by it. This fact is not well-known. For example, even in the diplomatic correspondence cited in the previous chapter, the Soviet Union was appealed to as a signatory of this convention. This lack of clarity has to be explained.

Four Geneva Conventions were signed: in 1864, 1906, 1929 and 1949. In 1977 two supplementary protocols were signed. For the issue we are dealing with, the important one is the Third Geneva Convention of 1929, about the treatment of prisoners of war. The Soviet Union did not sign this Convention and therefore was not bound by its provisions. However, in 1949 the above-mentioned agreements were revised and supplemented with an agreement about the protection of the civilian population in time of war. The whole of this Geneva Convention about the protection of the victims of war was signed by two hundred states, including the Soviet Union. So, the Soviet Union was not a signatory of the original Geneva Convention about prisoners of war in 1929; but when in 1950 it was sharply criticized for not having released all its prisoners of war within the deadline,⁹¹ it *was* a signatory of the Geneva Convention of 1949, even though it did not ratify it until 1954. Nevertheless, for the Red Army to arrest and deport the civilian population of its ally Czechoslovakia was, however you look at it, a demonstration of brute force and malice.

There were many prisoners of war from Slovakia, especially in the areas which belonged to Hungary after the Vienna Award, where whole villages and districts were stricken. For example, on 26 June 1947 the District Administrative Commission in Parkan sent information through the Commissariat of the Interior to the Ministry of the Interior in Prague that there were 645 men in captivity from that locality alone who were for the most part "captured on the Russian battlefield in Russia."⁹²

Civilians and prisoners of war returned together in the repatriation transports, although there were relatively few civilians in comparison with the

prisoners of war. For example, the repatriation transport of 7 January 1949 in Košice had only two civilians among 500 repatriates; all the others were prisoners of war. Similarly, on 13 April 1949 there was only one civilian in a transport of 63 repatriates. The parish of Somotor reportedly declared 395 deported persons to 18 September 1945 but of these 323 were prisoners of war and 72 abducted during the war by Germans to concentration camps; there was not one civilian abducted to the USSR among them. Ladislav Boroň maintains that hundreds of lists from parishes in the south of Slovakia show all the repatriated persons from the USSR as persons abducted, but apparently 99% were prisoners of war and only 1% abducted civilians. In contrast with this, 99% of those deported from the territory of the Slovak Republic were civilians and perhaps only 1% prisoners of war.⁹³

I do not fully agree with these estimates. Even though the lists of persons in repatriation transports often do not distinguish between prisoners of war and internees, there are lists recording deportations from which it is plain that a certain number of civilians was abducted in one day from a certain locality. From this point of view lists of deportations are a more reliable source than lists of repatriations. It is, however, quite understandable, and one has to agree that many prisoners of war were recorded as abducted. They were often taken into captivity on Slovak territory and in Hungary. If the military status of the person concerned was blurred by their forced involvement in defense work or by the fact that the person concerned was originally a soldier in the Hungarian or Slovak Army, but deserted and eventually found his way home, it is no wonder that these persons felt more like civilians than prisoners of war and thus let themselves be entered as such during internment.

In August 1945 there were around 700 to 1,000 Slovak prisoners of war interned in a Soviet prison camp in Hungary. They were members of the 1st Technical Division of the Slovak Army and participants in the Slovak National Uprising captured by the Germans and put in German prisoner-of-war camps. The Germans sent them as forced labor digging trenches in Hungary where they were made prisoners of war by the Red Army. On 3 August 1945 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow was instructed by the Foreign Ministry to take steps immediately with the Soviet authorities to have this group released since allegedly the camp in Sighet had to be liquidated and all the prisoners taken first to Focșani in Romania and then to the Soviet Union. It had to be argued that the soldiers were pressed into the 1st Technical Division by force, and that they were Slovaks who voluntarily took part in the Slovak National Uprising, or fought as partisans for the liberation of Czechoslovakia.⁹⁴ The Focșani

camp, with Sambor (Polish and Russian: Sambor; Ukrainian: Sambir) in Galicia and Beltsy (Russian: Beltsy; Romanian and Moldovian: Bălți) in Bessarabia, had the highest mortality among internees. Twenty thousand Hungarians from Ruthenia died here, as well as many others.⁹⁵

Lists of the Deported

People were deported from all over Slovakia, everywhere the Red Army penetrated. Villagers were deported, typically farmers and farm laborers, but so were inhabitants of the towns and cities of Slovakia. However, the areas worst affected were south and east Slovakia and the Spiš district, particularly areas with a large Hungarian minority and a Germany minority.

Many lists of civilians deported from Slovakia have survived. I mention some here as examples to help us imagine the extent of the deportations. However, the lists have to be approached with due care. Since they were being compiled over and over again, it is not easy to establish the number of deportees. If we counted every name, there would be an unrealistically large number, for most names occur in several lists. Also, we cannot be sure that lists have survived from every locality from which people were deported. Partial lists prepared on the parish level were sent to the higher authorities where they were merged and, as a rule, processed through the Commissariat of the Interior to the Ministry of the Interior in Prague. The ministry then prepared the complete list of deportees from Czechoslovakia which could be used by the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow when negotiating with the Soviets. It seems, however, that apart from one list containing 1,254 names the Soviet side was always given ad hoc lists, just as they were compiled at the given moment. No complete list of deportees has yet been found which would show the overall situation in Slovakia, or the whole of Czechoslovakia. For the time being the only way to determine the total number has been to combine the surviving partial lists, knowing that they cannot be one hundred percent definitive.

The lists of the deportees, which were passed mainly to the Foreign Ministry, document where the deportations as a whole were the most extensive. I did more detailed research on some sets of lists; in some of the more comprehensive I give the number of names they contain, but this is not an exhaustive register of all surviving lists. Some lists contain dozens of names while some have only two or three. Some are clearly exceptional—for example, the names of three persons deported from České Budějovice in Bohemia.

Table 2: Lists of deported inhabitants of the villages, parishes and towns according to the administrative districts (selection):

<i>District (current)</i>	<i>Village, Parish, Town</i>
Cities Bratislava, Košice, Prešov	A number of lists ⁱ
Bánovce nad Bebravou	Several parishes
Dunajská Streda	Beš (Hungarian Bős)—currently Gabčíkovo, Dolný Štál, Dunajská Streda
Galanta	Galanta ⁱⁱ
Gelnica	Gelnica, ⁱⁱⁱ Mníšek nad Hnilcom, Smolnícká Huta, ^{iv} Vondrišiel (currently Nálepko)
Humenné	Humenné*
Kežmarok	Bušovce, Holumnica, Kežmarok, ^v Ľubica, Maldur (currently Podhorany), Ruskinovce, ^{vi} Spišská Belá, Stará Lesná,* Toporec, other localities in the Spiš area ^{vii}
Komárno	Čičov, Gúta (currently Kolárovo), Kerť (probably Keť), Lakunclear; maybe Lég near Lehnice, Dunajská Streda district, Nová and Stará Ďala (Hungarian: Gyalla)—currently Dulovce, Perbete (currently Pribeta), Svätý Peter
Košice—okolie	Buzita, Slovak: Buzica,* Dvorníky (currently Dvorníky-Včeláre), Horváty, currently Chorváty,* Jánok, Slovak: Janík,* Jasov, Moldava nad Bodvou, Nižný and Vyšný Medzev, ^{viii} Peder,* Perín, Seleška (perhaps Čečejevce-Seleška), Seňa, ^{ix} Šomody, currently Drienovec,* Štós, Truna nad Bodvou, currently Turňa nad Bodvou,* Turnianská Nová Ves,* Veľká Ida, ^{xi} Žarnov*

* The locations indicated with an asterisk are documented in AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 39, folder 2.

ⁱ Lists of people who for the most part ended in the Donbas, recording for example 54 and 18 persons, and a number of other lists. AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 37, folder 2.

ⁱⁱ Eleven deported persons listed. AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 38, folder 6.

ⁱⁱⁱ List given to the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the embassy of the USSR on 24 September 1945 contains 26 names. AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 37, folder 3.

^{iv} List of 28 arrested 18 February 1945, received by the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, 13 March 1947. AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 38, folder 6.

^v The most comprehensive list of Kežmarok contains 71 names.

^{vi} This parish no longer exists; in 1952/1953 it was evacuated and turned into a military training ground.

^{vii} 41 recorded persons. Ibid.

^{viii} Eighty men, women, and pupils from the local school. AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 37, folder 2.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Forty eight persons deported mainly to Nuzalag 228/4b, list received 5 April 1947. From the same village 27 men are recorded as prisoners of war. Ibid., folder 1.

^{xi} Ibid.

Krupina	Krupina*
Kysucké Nové Mesto	Nesluša*
Levice (present district Levice includes also former district Želiez- ovce)	Bielovce, Demandice,* Hokovce,* Hronský Svätý Jur (cur- rently Jur nad Hronom), Kalná nad Hronom,* Levice,* Pastovce, Sakalos (this is the parish of Ipeľský Sokolec, Hun- garian: Ipolyszakállos), Želiezovce
Levoča	Levoča, ^{xii} Spišské Podhradie
Liptovský Mikuláš	Various lists ^{xiii}
Lučenec	Bulhary, Csoma, currently Čamovce, ^{xiv} Fiľakovo, Mikušovce, Opatová (could not be identified), Raďovce (maybe Radzovce), Šíd ^{xv}
Malacky	Malacky*
Michalovce (present district Michalovce includes also former district Veľké Ka- pušany)	Bajany, Beša, Budaháza (currently Budince), Čičarovce, Ižk- ovce, Maťovce, Ňaradské/Kláčany (in fact, Kapušianske Kľa- čany), Palín, Ptruksa, Ruská, Vajkovce (currently Kapušianske Vojkovce), Slemence, Veľké Kapušany, Veľké Vojany, Vešk- ovce ^{xvi}
Martin	Vricko
Námestovo	Veselé ^{xvii}
Nitra	Nitra*
Nové Zámky ^{xviii}	Nové Zámky, Šurany, ^{xix} Parkáň ^{xx} (currently Štúrovo), Veľký Kýr
Pezinok	Several parishes
Prešov	Prešov ^{xxi}
Prievidza	Lazany

^{xii} The most comprehensive list reports 91 names. Ibid.

^{xiii} According to a list of 7 July 1947, thirteen persons from this district were held in the camp Asbest 84/1 in the Sverdlovsk Oblast, in Nuzalag and Dzauzhikau (currently Vladikavkaz) in Northern Ossetia, and in the camp Krasnaya Gorka in Siberia. Ibid.

^{xiv} Twenty-eight persons, according to A list of persons of Hungarian and German ethnicity who according to the law now in force have lost their Czechoslovak citizenship and have to be expelled from the Czechoslovak Republic and find themselves in detention on crossing the front of the Red Army beyond the frontiers of the Czechoslovak Republic. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 2.

^{xv} Twenty nine names, *ibid.*

^{xvi} AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2.

^{xvii} AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 51.

^{xviii} The lists of this district are from 7 and 8 July 1947. Inhabitants of the district Nové Zámky were interned in Magnitogorsk in the Chelyabinsk Oblast, in Komisarovo near Smolensk, in Cherepovets in the Vologda Oblast, in a camp in the parish of Steblov in the Novosibirsk Oblast; there are more garbled names and completely unknown places.

^{xix} Sixty-five persons deported from this village. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2.

^{xx} Particularly large deportations on 3 December 1944 from Malý Parkáň. Ibid.

^{xxi} List of 73 deported men mainly to Yenakievo received 1 April 1947. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 6.

Poprad	Batizovce,* Poprad—Stráže, Poprad—Matejovce, ^{xxii} Nová Lesná,* Hranovnica, Starý Smokovec, Veľký Slavkov*
Revúca (present district Revúca includes also former district Tornaľa)	Skerešovo,* Tornaľa
Rimavská Sobota (present district Rimavská Sobota includes also former district Feledince, currently Jesenské)	Abovce, Détér, currently Gemerské Dechtáre, ^{xxiii} Dulovo, Feledince, Hodejov, Hubovo, Jánošovce (Hungarian Jánosi), Lenka, Riečka, Svätý Kráľ' (currently Kráľ'), Štrkovec, Tomášovce and a number of villages and parishes from this district ^{xxiv}
Rožňava	Kečovo, Hrhov, ^{xxv} Rožňava*
Ružomberok	Lubochňa
Sabinov	Sabinov*
Spišská Nová Ves	Hnilčík, Hrabušice, Koterbachy (currently Rudňany), Krompachy, Letanovce, Markušovce, Spišská Nová Ves, ^{xxvi} Spišské Vlasy, Spišský Hrušov, other localities in the Spiš area ^{xxvii}
Stará Ľubovňa	Stará Ľubovňa
Tvrdošín	Trstená ^{xxviii}
Trebišov (current district Trebišov includes also former districts Kráľovský Chlmec and Somotor)	Bačka, Biel', Borša (Hungarian Borsi), Boľany, Černochoy, Dobrá, Ladmovce, Malá and Veľká Bara, Malá Toroňa, Veľká Toroňa (correctly Malá Trňa and Veľká Trňa), ^{xxix} Malý Horeš, ^{xxx} Malý Újlak (Hungarian Kisújlak), also Nová Vieska pri Bodrogu (currently part of Somotor), Somotor, Trebišov, Véc (Hungarian Véc or Bodrogvéc), part of Somotor, Pavlovo, Svätá Mária, Zemplín, and other parishes
Trenčín	Trenčianská Teplá*
Veľký Krtíš	Vrbovka, Modrý Kameň
Vranov nad Topľou	Pavlovce, Vranov nad Topľou*

^{xxii} Twenty-four deported, mainly to the Caucasus and the Donbas AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 2, list of 12 December 1946.

^{xxiii} Three persons from Hodejov and four persons from present Gemerské Dechtáre, all of them of Hungarian ethnicity, deported. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 72.

^{xxiv} “Number of people previously deported from parishes in the Feledince district returned ‘on their own account’.” AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2.

^{xxv} Further information on what happened in this parish comes later in this chapter.

^{xxvi} Deportation in January, February and March 1945 of 119 persons mostly to the Donbas and to the Caucasus. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 3.

^{xxvii} Forty-one recorded persons. Ibid.

^{xxviii} Nine deported persons, among them were most probably some of Polish ethnicity. List of interned persons of Slovak, Czech or “other Slavonic ethnicity” from the parish of Trstená contains 9 names of deportees; AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 3.

^{xxix} Probably 2500 deported from Trebišov and 200 from Malá and Veľká Toroňa. According to Dobroslav Pustaj, chairman of the Confederation of Those Persecuted by Communism in Zvolen. Letter in the personal archive of the author.

^{xxx} The list for the parish of Malý Gyres, in Hungarian Kisgéres, may mean this locality.

Žiar nad Hronom	Janova Lehota *
Locality and district not identified*	Milbach
	Melechd ^{xxxI}
	Tomášová ^{xxxII}
	Veľké Máčadlo ^{xxxIII}

In the most seriously afflicted localities attempts were made as early as summer 1945 to coordinate the registration of the number of deportees and their names. On 12 June 1945 the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak National Council for the district of Košice sent a directive to the District National Committee in Spišská Nová Ves that they should within two weeks, by 1 July, give the authorities in Košice a list of the deportees. The head of the Presidium, Dr. Švehla, even thought about how to get the list to Košice in the most practical way and writes in the directive that the list can be sent with someone who is traveling to Košice on official business.

Many lists of deportees have survived from the beginning of July 1947. That marked the culmination of the centrally organized action in which the local police stations and local national councils had to prepare, on the basis of a directive of the minister of the interior, lists of those who had returned and lists of those who had not. These lists were then made available to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague and became the basic source used by the Czechoslovak diplomats in negotiations. They started making these lists when it became apparent they would not succeed in convincing the Soviets to release Czechoslovaks en bloc. From the beginning, the Soviet side had held the intransigent opinion that the Czechoslovak side had to provide its own lists.

Professions and Ages of the Deportees, According to the Lists

Some lists of internees were arranged according to profession. The two earliest surviving lists are of deported members of the Slovak gendarmerie (thirty names), and officials of the central authorities—with only one

^{xxxI} Not identified.

^{xxxII} No parish of this name was found in Slovakia; maybe it is an error for the name Tomášovce of which there are several in Slovakia, all of which are to be found in the region of deportation, including the parish of Spišské Tomašovce.

^{xxxIII} There exists "A list of persons of Hungarian ethnicity of the parish of Veľké Máčadlo, who were detained and sent beyond the borders of the Czechoslovak Republic" of 3 April 1946, containing 81 names, but the locality could not be identified. AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 37, folder 1.

name [!]⁹⁶—which the Office of the Presidium of the Slovak National Council sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague on 26 June 1946. The persons listed were deported to the camps of Yenakievo and Gorlovka in the Stalino region of the Donbas; most of the deportees from Slovakia worked in the mines.⁹⁶

The gendarmes were often (but not always) interned in one camp. Many gendarmes from Slovakia were interned in Khodorov (Khodoriv) camp no. 232 in the Drohobych (Drohobych) district near Stryi in Ukraine; another, larger, group of gendarmes was in the Stalino region, Yenakievo district, in Rudniky (we can tell by its name that it was a mining camp). This camp had a number of branches; for example, one document mentions camp no. 14. Another group was in a camp called Gorlovka in the same district, described in the memoirs of several Slovaks who were held there. However, Gorlovka was not just one camp; the name must have covered a group of camps because in the documents we have a reference to Gorlovka camp no. 23.

A list has also survived of the deported employees of the Commissariat of Transportation, sent on 25 June 1947 by the Office of the Presidium of the Slovak National Council to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague. This list contained thirty-five names.⁹⁷ At the same time the Office of the Presidium gave the Foreign Ministry a list compiled from requests for intervention from families according to district. In mid-1947 twenty-nine families from Prešov requested intervention, two each from the Poprad and Spišská Nová Ves districts, one each from the Trenčianské Teplice and Snina districts and fifteen from the Stará Ľubovňa district.⁹⁸ This is surprisingly few, for we know there were far more interventions.⁹⁹ It can be explained by the fact that the main list to be sent to Prague at that time was the list of the employees of the Commissariat of Transportation, and other requests available at that moment were just attached to it.

These lists were presented to the Soviet embassy in Prague. It would be difficult to find out how effective they were, and I believe they made no impression at all. In the minds of the Soviets, the gendarmerie and the local government officials were collaborators and class enemies, and these professions were a particular target for deportation. It is, however, strange that so few names of these professions are given in the lists. If we look at lists of deportees arranged according to domicile with professions given additionally, we see that both gendarmes and officials are well represented among the deportees.

On 19 December 1946 the Commissariat of Education and Culture in Bratislava put together a “List of Czechoslovak Citizens from the Educa-

tion Sector Apprehended and Interned in the USSR.” This list contains 364 names.¹⁰⁰ There was also a list of interned employees of the school administration of 8 April 1948, but unfortunately only the cover page has survived and not the list itself.¹⁰¹ There is one more list of this type, but undated, containing 564 names of deported employees of the education sector, divided according to region and giving the names, dates of birth and data of those apprehended.¹⁰² If we consider the number of teachers from Slovakia mobilized in the Slovak Army who were killed or who ended as prisoners of war, and if we add the deportations of teachers, we can see that education in Slovakia was drastically affected.

The deported included a large group of people who would have been considered dignitaries in their own regions. It seems that the Red Army paid special attention to this social group. Just for illustration (with the reservation that they may be prisoners of war, but are more probably deported civilians, since there is no note about military service in their records and alongside the date and place of birth, their profession is given as the main identification) I give the names recorded in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry: businessmen Julius Šolc (1907, Vondrišiel, currently Nálepkovo), Simon Valčák (1896, Stará Ľubovňa), Karol Lampart (1900, Stará Ľubovňa), Viktor Kasperkevič (1911, Stará Ľubovňa), Samuel Dublein (1907, Huncovce) and Josef Kredatus (1907, Malý Slavkov), teachers Štefan Kušnir (1898, Spišská Nová Ves) and Ivan Kneč (Kmeč?) (1918, Jarabina), officials Julius Kinsky (1910, Spišská Belá), Albert Streit (1889, Matejovce), Gabriel Adonyi (1914, Košice), Štefan Kolodzej (1912, Stará Ľubovňa), Emil Herman (1907, Stará Ľubovňa), Jozef Kristiník (1910, Petrovice) (unclear: this may be Petrovice u Bytče or just Petrovce, of which there are four in Slovakia, all of them subjected to deportations), Josef Smrek (1898 Podolinec) and Alexander Vnuk (1905, Stará Ves), notary Ladislav Fuchs (1916, Švahy)—(probably Šahy), legal counselor Josef Jochman (1901) and Doctor Edmund Fabry (1911, Lipjany, currently Lipany).¹⁰³

However, the Soviets targeted others besides the professions listed above. Many farmers were deported—for example, Štefan Papík (1899, Turzovka) and Ján Hnaš from Jakubjany, currently Jakubany (1924), Ján Kundla (1902), Štefan Compel (1905) and dozens more from various localities;¹⁰⁴ there are also seasonal workers and the unemployed, and even a strolling tinker and a homeless person.

Insofar as the professions of the deported persons are recorded, they range from the highly qualified down to hired agricultural laborers—doctors, primary school teachers, secondary school teachers, school in-

spectors, chairman of the senate of the regional court, court counselor, procurator, notary, director of the state forests, mayors of parishes, gendarmes, the employee of a board of trustees, businessmen, farmers, railway workers, railway officials, dispatchers, engine drivers, post office officials, post office clerks, local government officers, city officials, students, monks, craftsmen, electricians, tailors, cooks, carpenters, bank clerks, “arms manufacturers,” locksmiths and gardeners. Some people were recorded not by profession but by political affiliation and function, mostly with a mitigating note: “member of the Hlinka Guard without function, and participant in the Slovak National Uprising” (this information is repeated in several cases); “member of the Hlinka Guard without function”; “member of the Hlinka Guard without function—businessman, chairman of the HSĽS (Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party) in his place of residence, and did not harm anyone”; “passive leader of the Hlinka Guard with activity in the resistance and a participant in the Slovak Uprising”; “member of the Hlinka Guard on the railways—under coercion.” Sometimes all that is given is “Leader of the Hlinka Guard,” “member of the HSĽS.”

A few notes on the age of the deportees: the deported gendarmes were men in their prime, born in the years 1908–1914, although there were older men among them, such as the fifty-year-old Štefan Zelenay. One of the oldest deportees was the police inspector Štefan Haviár, born on 13 August 1877 (Horka, Poprad district) who was sixty-eight at the end of the war. According to a document in the Foreign Ministry Archives he was the first to be interned in Sambor, then he was taken to Kiev, and in the end like many others worked in the mines of the Donbas—in Yenakievo.¹⁰⁵

The medical doctor Rudolf Uhle was even older, probably the oldest deportee recorded. Dr. Uhle was of German origin and was deported from Moravská Ostrava. He was born on 7 January 1874, and deported when he was seventy-one years old. Pavel Benkovský, a small businessman from Prešov, was born in the same year, captured by the Red Army on 25 February 1945 and taken off for work in the mines in the Donbas. There are records of older people, such as Julius Libura of Prešov,¹⁰⁶ born in 1875. There was a relatively large number in the age category born between 1875 and 1885, such as Dr. Alexander David, born 6 February 1885.¹⁰⁷ To be deported to the Gulag in one’s sixties was almost certainly a death sentence.

The youngest deportees were mainly secondary school pupils, in some cases below the age of majority. See the chapters on, for example, Rudolf Stybar, Vladimír Tomiška, the students from Banská Bystrica and Dušan

Slobodník describing the deportation of seventeen- and eighteen year-old Slovaks whose names I was able to ascertain. There are still more in Petr Juščák's book. It should be added that even more drastic cases were recorded among the deportees from Hungary—thirteen-year-old children and men aged over eighty, picked up at random in the street.¹⁰⁸

As an example, I have transcribed above lists from Spiš as one of the most seriously affected regions. In the District Archive of Spišská Nová Ves there is a document entitled "List of Persons—Slovaks—from the District of Spišská Nová Ves Who Were Held by Organs of the Red Army and Deported to the USSR." This list contains 203 names ranging from people born between 1895 and 1926—that is, aged from 19 to 55. From other lists we learn that most men deported from Spišská Nová Ves in January, February and March 1945 ended in the Donbas or in the Caucasus;¹⁰⁹ we also know that at least ten deportees from Spišská Nová Ves were in the camp Cherepovets in the Vologda Oblast.¹¹⁰ Thirty-one men were deported from the small parish Vondrišiel in the Spišská Nová Ves district alone, most of them farmers and miners, but including a glazier and an engine driver. In other lists from the same archive there are such professions as clerk, teacher, locksmith, professor, boiler man, laborer, student, gendarme, railway worker, notary and tailor. The deportations of men of German ethnicity were recorded separately—according to one list there were fifteen from Spišská Nová Ves, but that cannot be all; this list must be one of a number. The leader of the *politupravlenie* (political administration) 38th Army of the 4th Ukrainian Front in Spišská Nová Ves was Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev. With his rank, he undoubtedly had the last word in deportations from Spišská Nová Ves and surroundings.

The deportations from Spišská Nová Ves continued for a relatively long time and it is hard to imagine what sort of stress the local population must have been living through at this time. According to the lists of the deported in the district archive which give the dates of deportation, 27 January to 22 February 1945 was an intensive period; other lists with many names show that arrests were taking place on 13, 15, 19 and 24 March and then again in the first week of April, indicating a period of two and a half months of terror and human tragedies.

Could the Deportations Have Been Avoided?

Many of the deported thought until the end of their days that no one at all stood up for them, that at an official level no one did anything for them, that no one tried to get them back home. I think this is not entirely true,

but one should not hold this against those deported. According to František Vnuk,¹¹¹ during this period the Slovak National Council

turned to the delegate for the liberated territory with urgent requests for him to intervene with the responsible organs (with the command of the 4th Ukrainian Front) for the liberation of detained citizens “who are politically reliable and whose detention was probably based on error or on wrong information.” Among the detained were former political prisoners... In archived documents of the SNR of the Košice period there is not one single document which is evidence that the command of the Red Army paid any attention to these requests.

Many authors have shown that from the constitutional point of view the SNR should have had jurisdiction within the liberated territories. That is true in theory, but in practice much more difficult to realize because the Red Army considered the liberated territories to be a military zone and imposed its dominant role. The impotence of the SNR in the liberated territory is documented by the following examples:

On 20 February 1945 the Commissariat for Industry, Trade and Supplies notified the Presidium of the Slovak National Council:

The SNR has no power today, as it depends on the good will of the citizen, on what he respects and what he doesn't... Sometimes the Red Army authorities refuse us entrance to industrial factories... In most cases where enterprises are capable of functioning, they take them into their own hands, acquiring raw and auxiliary materials.

On 20 February 1945 the SNR leaders in Košice put a request to Lt. Col. Dvorkin: “The SNR asks for kind permission to collect 40 tons of coal from the stocks of the Czechoslovakian State Railways. This coal is for heating the SNR.”

On 16 February 1945 in an announcement of the District National Committee in Vranov to the Presidium of the SNR:

The local military leadership of the Red Army refuses to issue any sort of travel permits, not even from parish to parish, and in this way, not recognizing the validity of permits issued by the Local or District National Committee, it makes administrative work almost impossible, not to mention providing supplies, and public life in the district.¹¹²

František Vnuk records that when the Red Army advanced westwards in the middle of April 1945, the command of the 4th Ukrainian Front transferred more territory to the Czechoslovak government and the Czechoslovak government immediately handed over this territory to the Slovak Na-

tional Council, yet the Red Army still remained the major power on the transferred territory. In this case it was the transfer of territory east of the line from Spišská Belá to Dobšiná in mid-April,¹¹³ and we can assume that the Red Army behaved no differently when other sections of territory were handed over. We can also see from this case that in the first months of 1945 when the largest numbers of deportations took place, the civilian population on territory occupied by the Red Army was completely in the hands of the Soviets, and the Slovak administration represented by the SNR had no power to intervene effectively.

The conditions of the Red Army for handing over territory into Czechoslovak (more precisely Slovak) hands were the following:

1. The Red Army reserves the right to keep control of postal, telegraph and telephone services and the railways.
2. The territory to be cleansed of unreliable elements of the German and Hungarian nationalities and collaborators.
3. The property of Germans, Hungarians and collaborators to be the perquisite (spoils of war) of the Soviet Army.
4. Comparative prices to be issued.
5. The Trebišov–Poprad rail link to be put into action as soon as possible.
6. Announcements to be made about currency changes in the rates of Czech/Slovak coupons, Slovak crowns and [Hungarian] pengős.
7. Mobilization to be carried out.

The Slovak National Council had reservations concerning points 2 and 4. It considered that “to cleanse the liberated territory from elements considered to be hostile to the Red Army” was its “principal task” but requested the Red Army to return civilians from internment because they came under Czechoslovak jurisdiction, and that in future civilians detained by the Red Army “be handed over to the security organs of the SNR and not deported from Czechoslovak territory.”¹¹⁴

The attitude of Czech and Slovak politicians toward deportation is for the most part characterized by evasion and caution. The attitude of the Czechoslovak Communist Party undoubtedly had a strong influence on it. Klement Gottwald had risibly commented on the deportations at a meeting of functionaries of the Slovak Communist Party and representatives of the Moscow leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on 8 April 1945: “When the Soviet organs laid their hands on someone there was a buzz and lament and intervention because maybe one just man was found among a hundred.”¹¹⁵

In the period shortly after the deportations there were a number of private and official initiatives. Many of the appeals of local national committees addressed to different sides with requests for the return of the deported citizens are in the archives. Requests for the release of detained persons are preserved in the archives of the local authorities. One request of this kind with a list of deported persons was addressed to the “Chairman of the Ukrainian National Republic, Lieutenant General Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev,” at this time in Kiev, but that was an exception. For the most part the requests were addressed to the Commissariats, to the Office of the President of the Republic and primarily to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the most part the requests tried to argue along lines already known to us: the deported were the victims of people’s malice; those who collaborated with the Germans are now lying to hide their own guilt; the deported were good patriots, and the important argument was that they are “very necessary for the consolidation and building of the new Czechoslovak Republic.” Some requests, such as that addressed to Nikita Khrushchev, do allow that among the deportees are also Slovaks who from the “political and Slovak point of view” [sic] were to some extent guilty, but that “we need these Slovak traitors” and they will be put before a Czechoslovak People’s Court.

2. Personal Stories of Deported Civilians

Written Sources and Oral History

It is a tremendous opportunity for a historian to talk to people who witnessed the events he or she is studying. Nowadays oral history has its own methodology and is an important part of research into contemporary history.¹¹⁶ Oral history naturally has its pitfalls; it has to deal with a substantial amount of subjectivity and it can help to illuminate only certain parts of the past. Nevertheless, it is an important source and should be used before it is too late.

Someone who was eighteen years old in 1945—the age of many of the deported—would have been seventy-five years old at the time I started my research. However, many of the deported were older and had already died. It is a terrible loss that for so many years they were unable to talk of their experiences. Much valuable evidence has been irretrievably lost. Some of them lived to see the end of Communism—a time in which it was taboo to mention the deportation of civilians to the Soviet Union—and subsequently published their memories as articles or books. These are listed in my bibliography. My work is based mainly on archival research supplemented by the unpublished memories of the eye-witnesses with whom I spoke. I have avoided repeating any personal evidence which is available in the publications of other authors. I would like to mention above all Petr Jusčák's *Odylečení* (Abducted), which contains an amazing amount of direct evidence.

*The Case of Gejza Pásztor*¹¹⁷

Gejza Pásztor was born on 13 March 1914 in Gelnica. (His first name is very close to the Hungarian Géza and his second name is definitely Hungarian. It is usual in Hungarian to give the surname first, followed by the given name; however, in all surviving documents his given name appears first, and Gejza Pásztor himself wrote it in this form.) His mother was German, from the Spiš region, so like many other children growing up in this environment Gejza was bilingual from infancy. He attended German primary and junior secondary school, and after that was apprenticed to a locksmith so he could learn Slovak. He then attended Slovak technical school in Bratislava and finished his secondary education in Košice. Gejza had an older brother and sister, both of whom attended German schools; his sister became a music teacher and his brother a solicitor. After leaving

technical school Gejza Pásztor registered at the Technical University in Brno—i.e., a Czech institution of higher education. Before starting university in 1934 he spent two years on national service, so that by the time he began his studies he was a lieutenant in the reserves. In 1938 and 1939 he was mobilized in Slovakia; after being demobilized he wanted to go back and finish his studies in Brno, but because by that time the Czech universities had been closed by the German occupying forces, he was allowed (after a long administrative procedure) to finish his studies at the German Technical University in Brno, helped by the fact that he was a Spiš German and spoke the language well. After graduating as an electrical engineer he went to work in a factory in Matejovce pri Poprade. He married and had a daughter; he was in good standing at the factory and held a management position. However, this picture of the satisfying life of a successful young man, a happy *paterfamilias*, was shattered by World War II. Ing. Pásztor was thirty-one years old in spring 1945. In April the Red Army reached the Poprad region and the tragic story of his deportation began.

As in other places, the deportation took place under the excuse of three days of work in which all the working men in the factory aged from eighteen to fifty had to participate. Gejza Pásztor remembers especially that the radio stations announced that with the advance of the front, the Red Army was abducting young people and sending them to Russia for forced labor. It was not a bolt from the blue; here, the deportations were known about in advance. Maybe in other places people did not have access to radio broadcasts and simply did not hear the news, but it seems that a fair number of people did know what was going on. Gejza Pásztor remembers units of what was called General Svoboda's army (Czechoslovak troops formed in the Soviet Union) arriving in Matejovce. They included many soldiers who were among the first Czechoslovak citizens to experience the Gulag, where they found themselves after crossing the borders into the Soviet Union in their flight from the Nazis and from which their only salvation was to enlist in the Czechoslovak Army in the Soviet Union. Several officers of Jewish origin had been billeted on the Pásztors and apparently told him in private that members of the NKVD in the Red Army were deporting people to the Soviet Union; they warned that this could happen to the inhabitants of Matejovce. When Pásztor and other employees of the Matejovce factory had been transported to Poprad and shut up in deplorable conditions in a building occupied by the NKVD, no one had any doubts about what was awaiting them. Apart from the terrible conditions and the rough way they were handled, they witnessed behavior

which demonstrated what sort of value the Russians put on intervention from the highest Czechoslovak authorities—ignoring, even tearing it up on the spot. Pásztor describes in addition how, when the prisoners were taken by truck to the collection camp in Poland, they passed Czechoslovak troops going in the other direction who advised them to flee. The question is whether flight was possible at that point. The deportees were very strictly guarded and treatment was brutal. Pásztor describes how their families were threatened with execution should one of them escape. Later, once he was in the camps, Pásztor saw how disorganized the administration was and realized that they had only been told that to frighten them. However, they could not have known that at the moment of deportation.

Pásztor was recognized as a competent expert; he had authority and a strong sense of responsibility for the factory and its employees. In the dramatic time when the front was advancing, he had stayed with his family in Matejovce because he felt there was no reason to flee, and he was also concerned about the factory—on the one hand, making sure that the retreating Germans did not blow it up, and on the other, being ready to start production as soon as hostilities ended. When around forty factory workers left for Poprad on what was supposedly a three-day stint, Gejza Pásztor went with them, even though he had warning signals that it was a step to deportation. He was thinking that in Poprad he might reclaim “his” people as being important for keeping the factory going.

When I interviewed Pásztor in 2001 he recalled how the approach of the Red Army activated people of a certain type; how these people knew in advance who would be chairman of the Local National Committee and who would be leading the local organizations of the Communist Party, and how, after the arrival of the Red Army, these people suddenly stepped forward as militiamen working closely with the Soviets. Pásztor described how the militiamen—Slovaks who had been involved in organizing the “three-day” work parties—were precisely those who gathered together the group of around forty people and de facto handed them over to the Soviets, and that one Soviet lieutenant even tried to keep Pásztor out of the transport. Evidence from a number of sources corroborates the fact that it was frequently local people who were the most energetic in organizing the deportations

The local committee in Matejovce later tried in vain to liberate their fellow citizens. The list of those deported from Matejovce has survived—the first name is that of “Ing. Gejza Pásztor, technical manager.” In 1946 the Local National Committee sent the list of persons in the USSR with a request for their speedy release to the chief command of the holding camp for

internees in Malacky, a crossing point into Slovakia. Why send it to Malacky? Maybe it was because many of the deported returned to their homeland via the railway station in Malacky and Chop (a small city and railway station on the westernmost point of Ukraine). However, there was no way in which Malacky could help, since the deported were in camps somewhere in the depth of the Soviet Union. Maybe it was mere lack of information that caused the list and the request to be addressed to Malacky. We know that during the long years of his deportation Pásztor was not allowed to write home even once, which probably applied to the other men from Matejovce as well. If then, the local authorities saw that deportees were returning home from Malacky, maybe they wrote to Malacky because they supposed that was the way to organize an intervention. All the same, the memorandum ended up at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it arrived on 13 December 1946. It was then deposited *ad acta* 1 April 1947.

Gejza Pásztor was deported on 14 February 1945 and returned on 14 June 1949, having spent nearly four and a half years in the Gulag. The longest stretch was spent in North Ossetia in the Nuzal camp, to which relatively many had been sent from Czechoslovakia and where they worked mainly in the lead mines. There was a critical moment when his repatriation had been agreed, but he was turned away from the repatriation transport as the Czechoslovak authorities had lost his documents. He spent another year in internment before being returned to his homeland.¹¹⁸ Whereas he had spent the time up to his “first repatriation” in one place in the Caucasian Mountains, in the course of his last year he was moved from camp to camp—Norilsk, Kiev, Lvov, and finally back in the repatriation camp at Luisdorf near Odessa. This last year (Pásztor could not know it was his last year) was filled with despair over his failed repatriation. In addition, the Soviet authorities repeatedly, often indiscriminately and with false promises, put pressure on Pásztor to accept Soviet citizenship and stay permanently in the USSR.

One of Gejza Pásztor’s saddest memories was that his daughter no longer recognized him on his return. After repatriation he and his wife were unable to reestablish their former relationship, and eventually divorced. Pásztor also had difficulties with the Czechoslovak Communist authorities, as did many other repatriated internees. On the one hand, they were threatened with punishment if they ever spoke of what they had endured in the Soviet Union, and on the other, as former political prisoners in the USSR, they were branded as enemies of socialism. Many former deportees remember how difficult it was for them to find work; opportunities were limited, they were frequently dismissed, and

on top of this, their children had difficulty in being admitted to higher education.

Once he reached retirement age, Gejza Pásztor asked for permission to move to West Germany. The Communist regime approved his request but refused permission for his (second) wife to move to Germany until she herself reached pensionable age. So Pásztor had to wait for several more years, until 1983, before he and his wife could start a new life in Germany.

On 15 November 1990 Pásztor obtained his registration document as a person abducted by units of the NKVD to the USSR, arranged by the Slovak Helsinki Committee in Bratislava. It was one of the first registrations. I asked Gejza Pásztor whether he had subsequently visited the Soviet Union and how he felt about it. He said that in the 1960s he had been there on a visit with his granddaughter who was a pen friend of a Russian schoolgirl in a Soviet town twinned with their own. He said his main feeling during the visit was one of ever-present fear.

Gejza Pásztor's memories largely confirmed my own impressions. For example, that prisoners of war had a better chance of repatriation than deported civilians. Prisoners of war had a certain status, whereas individual deportees were lost and there was "no official knowledge of them," as Pásztor explained. I came to the same conclusion. A large role in this forgetfulness was played by the impossibility of correspondence. It would seem that the possibility of sending letters home depended very much on the particular camp and on sheer chance. The starting principle was a ban on all correspondence, and in some cases letters sent to internees by their families would be destroyed. It was therefore both meaningless and outrageous that approval for repatriation to Czechoslovakia relied on internees presenting recent letters from family members as proof that they were Czechoslovak citizens and that their families had not been moved to Germany or Hungary. During the long years of his deportation Gejza Pásztor was unable to send even a line home, so his family had no idea whether he was still alive and if so, where. Mrs. Pásztorová knew that he had been deported to the USSR because inhabitants of Levoča had noticed imprisoned factory workers from Matejovce in the local court and told her, and she even obtained a written claim for her husband from the Czechoslovak government authorities in Košice—which, however, the Soviet soldiers ignored, even tearing it up in front of her, according to Gejza Pásztor. That was the last she heard of her husband. A number of witnesses said that internees of other nationalities were able to write home, but letters to Czechoslovakia were specifically banned. The reason given was that after

February 1948 the Czechoslovak Communist government insisted that it was impossible for the Soviet Union to be holding any deported Czechoslovak citizens. I think it is probably true that with the despotism that ruled in the camps, letters to Czechoslovakia were not allowed, but it was the same for other nationalities. Internees from Austria were not allowed to write to their relations until August 1951—which meant that for six and a half years after the end of the war Austrian internees could not even inform their families that they were still alive. The same applied to Italians and Spaniards.¹¹⁹

It would appear that the main reason was the international commitments of the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union had pledged itself to release all prisoners of war by the end of 1948, it could not, two or three years after the deadline had expired, allow letters to be written home from the Gulag. The only letter Pásztor succeeded in sending was a card, sent through the Red Cross to a distant aunt in the United States. Amazingly, this message arrived and was even answered—thanks to an officer in the Red Army who, however, paid dearly for this and according to Pásztor himself ended behind bars. For the most part the Red Cross gave scanty or even no hope. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the only institution with the power to negotiate over repatriation. After repatriation was finished on the Soviet side, the only institution which could be responsible for this agenda was the Red Cross, which was successful only in a few cases. Gejza Pásztor told me that when he returned home, he gave the Czechoslovak Red Cross the names and designations of the camps where at least 300 Czechoslovak citizens were interned, but that it had no effect at all.

Some eyewitnesses' memories give a slightly different picture. Some did succeed in sending home news of where they were. When we hear or read of a food parcel sent from Czechoslovakia to a camp run by the NKVD, we can hardly believe it. How could such a parcel get through when everything was always stolen? Clearly by a miracle, and it did not happen so often, more as a rare exception. It was a similar miracle for a prisoner to succeed in sending a letter to the Czechoslovak embassy or some influential authority in Moscow. During the prisoner's trip to the nearest small town he either succeeded in smuggling a letter into the post office or in paying some local person (usually with food) to take a letter to the post office. We can just about imagine that someone might get hold of paper, write a letter and even get it to the post office. It is more difficult to believe that, with the omniscient censorship and the incredible number of NKVD agents, the letter would actually be delivered. However, it did occasionally happen: Peter

Juščák gives some specific cases when, on the basis of such a letter, an inspection arrived at the camp and one or more internees were released. A few such situations are mentioned later in this chapter. However, it always involved a fortunate coincidence, and was very rare.

Dr. Viktor Fiedler

Gejza Pásztor had a very good friend in Nuzalag, Dr. Viktor Fiedler, a cultivated man who was a great support to Pásztor, so much so that without him he would frequently have fallen into the deepest despair. Dr. Fiedler too was eventually repatriated and the two remained close friends.

I came across Dr. Fiedler in the course of my research. On 10 November 1947 the Foreign Ministry wrote to the embassy in Moscow that a Dr. Viktor Fiedler, born 29 September 1907 in Štrba, was imprisoned in Nuzalag no. 515. Apparently the Ministry of the Interior had allowed him repatriation and he was included several times in the transport to the repatriation camp in Odessa, but the camp administration always removed his name from the transport because he was the only doctor in the camp, and moreover very skilled.¹²⁰ As the Foreign Ministry emphasizes, this was a person “of blameless reputation” and they had to intervene for him repeatedly. He is said to have been a very popular and selfless doctor back in Slovakia, known for his democratic convictions. He was of Hungarian ethnicity, but his children had been brought up as Slovaks, even though he had had the possibility to put his daughter into a Hungarian or German school. Before deportation he had been a senior consultant and hospital director in Spišská Sobota and completely devoted himself to this work. He had never been involved with any Fascist party, refused to join the Deutsche Partei, and as a result of pressure from this party had been dismissed as director. After that he had been based at the State Institute of Therapy for Children in Smokovec. He had already been intervened for by the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Office of the President of the Slovak National Council, as the Foreign Ministry repeatedly reminded the MID (Ministerstvo inostrannykh del [Ministry of Foreign Affairs]). In the end Dr. Fiedler did get as far as the repatriation camp in Odessa but was removed from the transport at the last moment, allegedly because “they didn’t have the paperwork for him.”

We will come across the names of Dr. Fiedler and Ing. Pásztor in the chapter about the official end to repatriation. Their cases were the last for which interventions were made before repatriation was officially concluded. Counselor Emil Štefan and Attaché Václav Vaško came on 13

May 1949 for a closing “repatriation visit” with Lieutenant General Konstatin D. Golubev, Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Matters of Repatriation. Štefan took the opportunity again to request Pásztor and Fiedler’s repatriation, saying they should have been repatriated the previous year and that it was the fault of the Czechoslovak authorities that this did not take place. Golubev promised “as far as possible” to release Fiedler and Pásztor.

After another intervention Fiedler got as far as the crossing point of Chop, but was then returned to the collection camp in Stryi, because he was apparently not on the list. It seems that he spent another five months in Stryi and after a new intervention returned at last to Czechoslovakia. It was 14 June 1949; he had been arrested on 14 February 1945, so like his friend Gejza Pásztor he had spent four and a half years as a deportee. We can only admire the spiritual strength of this doctor who went through such an agonizing process of repatriation. After his return to Czechoslovakia Dr. Fiedler became senior consultant in Dolný Smokovec.¹²¹

The Inhabitants of Veľký Blh

There is in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a list of 139 inhabitants of the village of Veľký Blh (Hungarian: Nagybalog), who were all deported in the course of one day—24 January 1945. Veľký Blh is a relatively large parish near Rimavská Sobota, lying in a region which became part of Hungary in 1938. In sources about the deportations we come across Vyšný and Nižný Blh, which now together make up Veľký Blh. Rimavská Sobota was seriously affected by the deportations, as were the parishes in its vicinity. This concerned mainly Blh and Uzovská Panita. From the lists of people deported one can see that the inhabitants of these parishes regularly intermarried, which made the human tragedy in the region much worse. Young women from Uzovská Panita who had married men from Vyšný Blh were deported with their husbands and husbands’ parents and siblings, while the parents and siblings of those young women were deported from Uzovská Panita. Fifteen men and women deported from Uzovská Panita were all, like the majority of the inhabitants of that region, of Hungarian ethnicity.¹²² Uzovská Panita, today a part of neighboring Veľký Blh, was very small, and the deportation of fifteen inhabitants must have been a tragedy for this village. The inhabitants of Blh were interned and deported in the course of one day, but did not share the same fate (at least, not all of them). Some succeeded in returning home earlier and several of these even “on their own account.” A

list compiled by the local police station on 30 March 1946 showed that up to now seven inhabitants of Blh had returned, all of them “on their own account.”¹²³ Others, however, were stranded much longer in the Gulag. As late as 1949 a list of fifteen members of this parish was handed to the Soviet side with a request for their repatriation, and on 3 March 1950 the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that of these fifteen only one person had returned.¹²⁴

On a visit to Blh I had the opportunity to talk to two old men, friends, who had suffered deportation and had been repatriated—Barnabás Elek and Július Pecsök. There are, however, many more victims of deportation living in the village, as well as several married couples who were either deported together, husband and wife, or who had got married after their return. Many deported inhabitants of Blh did not live to be repatriated, and many of those who survived deportation have now passed away. At the time of these interviews, most of the survivors were seventy and more years old.

The deportation from Blh took place on a familiar pretext—an order to go and clear snow for two days. This work was a duty for women too, aged between sixteen and fifty. Unlike Gejza Pásztor, the two men I spoke to, Elek and Pecsök, were quite simple people without higher education—Barnabás Elek was a shoemaker in Rimavská Sobota and Július Pecsök helped his father on the farm. Before their deportation the inhabitants of Blh were concentrated in one of the larger houses in the village. As soon as everyone was there the Soviet soldiers began to treat them as prisoners and criminals and, with weapons at the ready, herded them on foot to Miskolc in Hungary.

The deported were held in Miskolc for a week and on 31 January were loaded onto a railway car. After a journey of seventeen days in very cruel conditions they arrived in the Donbas where they were divided between camps. Elek and Pecsök remember that they, with some of the others, were taken from the train to a camp called Parkamón, while others went to a camp called Delta 2. Engraved on both their memories is the fact that, even though the camp had been newly built and there were new bunks of fresh wood, these new bunks were already riddled with fleas. It was three days before they got any food which, when it came, was some sort of green swill. There was no water anywhere in the camp. At the beginning there were German prisoners of war interned with them who were after a while taken somewhere else. This information confirms the NKVD officials’ indifference as to whether the interned were prisoners of war or deported civilians. The interned included Soviet soldiers who not long previously had been at the front.

The two old men made other important observations: an average of ten to fifteen people died every day, and the first to succumb were those who had at first seemed the strongest. It appeared that internees accustomed to heavy manual work and life in very modest, even poverty-stricken, conditions survived the shocking impact of deportation more easily than people who had experienced a high standard of living. There were many camps in the region where Elek and Pecsök were—practically the whole of an area of approximately 20 to 30 km in diameter was dotted with camps. The camp where they were interned was number 1,218, and the numbers went up to over 2,000. Július Pecsök spent one month short of five years in the camp (from January 1945 to 7 December 1949). During all that time he was allowed to write only four letters home. Barnabás Elek was released earlier, after three years of detention. Both remember that after their return they were “not popular” with their fellow citizens.

Especially tragic were the cases where mothers of small children were deported. The Red Army soldiers and officials of the NKVD were utterly callous in this respect. I talked to Alfred Poznan of Veľký Blh, who was left parentless at the age of ten, when the parish was almost depopulated. His father was a prisoner of war, and when on 24 January 1945 Alfred’s mother was taken with other inhabitants of Blh, young Alfred was left completely alone. Fortunately his grandmother was still alive and took him in. For three long years there was no news of his mother and they did not know whether she was still alive. When she did return home her son could hardly recognize her and there were problems in reestablishing the relationship. There were many such tragic cases.

Alfred Poznan told me that the inhabitants of Blh had been ordered to gather together, summoned by drumming at public open spaces in the village, and that at first the inhabitants experienced relief that the war had ended. The drumming, however, was an announcement that people should meet to discuss a “new regime.” After two to three days a new wave of drumming up the inhabitants took place, and this time it was more sinister. They were told it was necessary to ascertain “who among them could be counted on” and the people who gathered were interned, among them Alfred Poznan’s mother. The healthy were left in detention and those who were in a poor physical state were released. The leadership of the village took part in it all—a leadership which, as we know from other evidence, rapidly emerged after the arrival of the Red Army, with an interpreter and a Soviet doctor. The people who were interned in a large building in the village took fright and tried to flee. Straight after this there was a public announcement that anyone who tried to flee would be shot on the spot.

Poznan's mother was a healthy, attractive woman of thirty and no amount of pleading that her small child could not be abandoned had any effect.

Alfred Poznan made another interesting observation which well illustrates the atmosphere of intimidated silence which reigned in Communist Czechoslovakia about the deportations to the Soviet Union. When the families of those who died in the Gulag wanted to put up a memorial tablet in the local cemetery, they were not allowed to mention that the person concerned died in the Soviet Union, only that he or she died "in an unknown country." Alfred Poznan told me that, amazingly, some of those who survived the Gulag and returned became fervent representatives of the Communist regime and active Communists in their home parish.

Deportation of the Inhabitants of Hrhov

Hrhov (Hungarian: Görgő) in the district of Rožňava was one of those parishes from which the inhabitants were abducted en masse. The deportation virtually liquidated the generation of twenty-year-olds in Hrhov. According to the documents of the Archive of the Foreign Ministry the following were deported: Pavel Kupai (1923), Jozef Herceg (1922), Ladislav Fehér (1923), Ladislav Mihál' (1924), Ľudovít Bartók (1924), Dezider Rajči (1921), Karol Vozarik (1924), Ján Kardos (1922), Valentin Barta (1920), Štefan Motyka (1922), Jozef Tegdeš (1926), Alexander Klotňai (1924), Jozef Hanes (1923), Pavel Pogán (1923), Ernest Štefán (1925), Michal Keller (1925), Štefan Maté (1925), Vojtech Tóth (1926), Valentin Körtvéľ (1926) and Alexander Varga (1925); altogether twenty young men aged between nineteen and twenty-five. Older men were also deported: Ľudevít Marton (1900), Ľudevít Körtvéľ (1900), Štefan Nád' (1900), Ľudevít Sabó (1902), Ján Varga (1902), Ľudevít Majančík (1904), Pavel Körtvéľ (1905), Alexander Lacó (1906), Štefan Barta (1906), Štefan Kapci (1906), Jozef Lendel (1906), Jozef Demeter (1906), Daniel Die (1907), Štefan Valkai (1908), Pavel Rajczi (1911), Jozef Jeňo (1916) and Štefan Bece (1916).¹²⁵

At the time of writing, Ján Kardos is one of the few victims from Hrhov still alive. He was twenty-two when he was deported. After returning from the Gulag he returned to his home parish and spent the rest of his life there. Kardos remembers precisely that it was 21 February 1945 when this drastic change in the life of the simple bricklayer took place. The deportation followed the well-known scenario: after the Red Army had arrived in Hrhov, a man with a drum went round the parish announcing that all men over eighteen had to undertake three days of work in Košice and that they should take food to last three days. On 21 February 1945

approximately eighty men assembled, the youngest born in 1926, the oldest in 1900. Right from the start the men had a bad feeling about it and felt themselves very much under threat. Kardos remembers how worried and mistrustful they were; few of them believed they were just going for three days work in Košice. But word had gone round that if someone did not appear their family would be in trouble, which drove many of them to join the assembly. Their fears were confirmed when, once they had gathered, they were surrounded by soldiers of the Red Army with weapons at the ready who began to treat them like captives or criminals. They were kept under armed guard and not allowed to leave the room even to go to the toilet. All of them realized something was seriously wrong. Inhabitants of Hrhov with their own carts were ordered to drive the others to Košice. In Košice they were held for ten days under the same conditions described by other internees—the unpleasantness caused by having a bucket as a toilet in the same room, and the dirt in general, left an indelible impression on the minds of those involved. Here they were interrogated three times and divided into two groups—soldiers and political prisoners. Many of the civilians wearing clothes from home were put into the latter category. From Košice they were taken approximately thirty at a time in lorries to Sanok in Poland, and from there on a nine-day journey by freight train during which many of the deported died from exhaustion, hunger, thirst, stress and cold, until they arrived at the lead mines in Alagir near Galon in the Caucasus. Another camp in the Caucasus mentioned by Kardos as a place where he was interned was Dzauzhikau (Vladikavkaz), about 150 km from Tbilisi. Most of the Slovak deportees were held in these camps, and worked in the lead mines. Mortality was high and the conditions inhuman. One of them said that they “composted the corpses.” The “Ossetia military road” began here and the highest mountain range of the Caucasus stretched on the horizon. The feared camps of Sadon, Nuzal, Zgid, Alagir, Galon and Dzauzhikau were here in North Ossetia.

Ján Kardos worked for two and a half years in *kolkhozes* which, after the murderous conditions of the lead mines, was to some extent a relief. In the end he was taken to Zaporozhye (Ukrainian: Zaporizhia) in Ukraine where they promised him he would soon go home, but he was held there the whole year and then another month in Kiev. On 18 December 1950 he returned via Sighet in Romania but was taken to Hungary, where he was set to work on a building site in Miskolc, from which he escaped. Kardos spent six years less two months, from the age of twenty-two to twenty-eight, as a deportee in the Soviet Union. The Foreign Ministry intervened on behalf of the inhabitants of Hrhov but had only 27 names documented,

although many more were abducted from the parish. When the Foreign Ministry asked the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow if it had more detailed news of their fate, the embassy could not answer.¹²⁶ To all intents and purposes, the embassy's only source of information was the Foreign Ministry itself, which relied on family members who might have had news of deportees via messages or information from returned internees. The Czechoslovak diplomats could learn nothing from the Soviet side about individuals held in camps.

In such desperate conditions, what enabled people to hold on to life? Kardos told me that his life had not been a bed of roses even at home; they lived in poverty and were accustomed to work hard. In his opinion such people were able to hang on. After returning to his native turf he still spent some weeks hiding in the mountains near Hrhov, because he was afraid. He thought someone might report him as a fugitive, and moreover, he had no documents. It took several months for his fear to be assuaged, and for him to work with his father in the fields and the forest. He told me that in the Caucasus the local people had treated him well. They were mostly Ossetians; there were few Russians, but he had no hatred toward the Russians as a nation. He thought that the main guilt for the mass deportation from Hrhov lay on those who were at that time influential in the parish, who tried to save their own skins and willingly surrendered their neighbors to the Red Army. Apparently surrounding villages suffered the loss only of a few individuals. Some men in Hrhov escaped deportation by hiding, but how they lived in the community after the deportation of their fellow citizens and whether they were really subjected to repression for having avoided deportation, Ján Kardos was unable to say.

The Case of Rudolf Stybar of Košice

The Archive of the Foreign Ministry led me also to Rudolf Stybar. He was born in 1928 and was abducted from his home in Trebišov in 1945.¹²⁷ At the age of seventeen he was one of the youngest to be deported.

Rudolf Stybar was not Slovak by origin. His father was from the Opava region and his mother was a Czech who after finishing technical school for railway workers found a job in Medzilaborce in Slovakia, later moving to Trebišov. In Trebišov she married and bore four children. Rudolf Stybar was the eldest and at the time of writing the only one still alive. He helped his father, who was head of the local fire brigade, at work in the sugar refinery. On 2 January 1945 some "hooligans" visited their home and took him and his father away, allegedly for a day's work. Ap-

parently four other inhabitants were abducted from Trebišov as well as the Stybars; all of them had “German-sounding” names, not quite Slavonic. They were taken to Perechin (Ukrainian: Perechyn) in the Transcarpathian Ukraine, after that by truck to Stryi, where they joined a railway transport of deportees in cattle trucks, already in the hands of the NKVD. This transport headed toward the Dnepropetrovsk (Ukrainian: Dnipropetrovsk) Oblast, to Stalino, where maybe the greatest number of deportees from Czechoslovakia lived in a number of camps. After ten days the transport carrying Rudolf Stybar ended at Gorlovka station—this was the route for many of the deported, and Stybar remembers that there were people from Medzev, from Humenné and other places as well as Germans from Mukachevo (Ukrainian: Mukacheve). Throughout his internment Rudolf Stybar had no idea that his father, deported with him, was held in a neighboring camp not far from Gorlovka. From time to time Stybar could write home and occasionally received letters from which he learned that his father was taken to Russia ten days after him. In this connection, Stybar told me the following story: one afternoon in December 1945 a young lieutenant called Boris told him they would take a locomotive and go to Gorlovka. Once they were there Boris suddenly shouted: “*Tovarishch Stybar!*” (Comrade Stybar!). It was not only the seventeen-year-old Rudolf Stybar who replied, but another voice as well—and out of the crowd of internees emerged his father, thin and pitiful, being prepared for repatriation. So they met on the last day, since immediately afterwards his father was put on the return transport.

Rudolf Stybar was on the whole fortunate in his time in the Gulag. They made him a shunter on the railway, after which he carried coke to Factory no. 3 in Novaya Gorlovka (or as some called it, Horlovka), and was eventually sent on a course for engine driving, which he passed with excellent marks. While at work he was guarded by “an old man with a shotgun from the time of Maria Theresa” and it seems that Stybar’s internment, in spite of all its misery, was of some use to him because eventually he became “*dez-hurny po stantsii*” (assistant station master) of Gorlovka and was able to get to the bazaar in Staraya and Novaya Gorlovka, where from time to time he bought a little black flour and baked some griddle cakes.

Rudolf Stybar thought that people were turning to the Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow, at that time Zdeněk Fierlinger, and that maybe he had done something on behalf of the deported, or at least they thought so at the time, because they had been told they would soon go home. From other evidence, however, we know that those phrases were often used by Soviet soldiers—“just work a little longer and then you’ll go home”—

without regard to the fact that internment could last many years. As far as intervention by Zdeněk Fierlinger on behalf of the deported is concerned, there is not the slightest trace that this ambassador did anything at all on behalf of the deportees. The first official intervention got under way once the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had moved from Košice to Prague, and especially when Professor Jiří Horák was made ambassador in Moscow.

Rudolf Stybar was unusually fortunate. He was taken to the repatriation camp in Luisdorf near Odessa as early as April 1946 and after three days was handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities in Chop. Even though the journey to his homeland took place in better railcars than cattle cars, it could end in tragedy for some repatriates, as it almost did for two sisters, Ann and Lotta, who fell ill on the journey. It seems that in Kiev Rudolf Stybar prevented them from being thrown off the repatriation train, because if that had happened they would have been unlikely ever to return home. In Chop they spent several days in the open air until people from the NKVD, arriving from Uzhgorod (Ukrainian and Czech: Uzhhorod), loaded them onto a train and took them over the border to Čierna nad Tisou. They were advised to escape by Czechoslovak railway workers, otherwise they would be interned again in Košice. Understandably those who could, did not wait for formalities, and set off home for themselves. Rudolf Stybar remembers that his family and neighbors knew about his return even before he arrived.

We could say that it was, all things considered, a happy ending. However, Rudolf Stybar's story was far from over. Even though he had only spent one year, his eighteenth, as a deportee, as a former political prisoner in the Soviet Union he spent the rest of his life with a blot on his reputation. Even his wife, a saleswoman, was constantly followed and treated with suspicion and distrust. The story of how this marked him for his whole life was immensely interesting and lasted longer than the story of his deportation to the USSR. Every time he found employment the same thing happened: once the Personnel Department found out he had been a political prisoner in the Soviet Union he was immediately dismissed and it took him a long time to find another job. There was nothing special about the jobs he found, usually as a laborer, but he had difficulty in finding even this kind of work. It was only thanks to his cousin that he found work in the foundries in Vítkovice. Later he negotiated a position in the East Slovak Ironworks and even signed a contract, but lost the job because someone picked up on the fact that he had been imprisoned in the Soviet Union. In 1962 Stybar went in desperation to see the chairman of local Communist Party where he protested against such attacks. The Party did

intervene—he was given a job as a laborer on a building site. At that time Czechoslovakia was a socialist state where unemployment could not exist and the right to work was anchored in the constitution. Yet, one had to use manipulation such as the protection of a cousin or intervention from the local head of the Communist Party for a job on a building site to be granted to someone who seventeen years earlier had been abducted to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, whatever kind of employment Rudolf Stybar found, he always worked to his utmost and, given the limitations, worked his way up to a more responsible position, evidence that he was an undeniably capable man, full of initiative, and in other circumstances would have had a successful professional career ahead of him.

Chmeľnica near Stará Ľubovňa

The case of the German-speaking Spiš parish of Chmeľnica near Stará Ľubovňa is a graphic example of how devastating deportation could be. At that time Chmeľnica was a completely German agricultural parish known as Habgart or Hopgarten. There was a German school, and the children learned Slovak once a week. Jan (Johann) Jachmann and Andrej Lang told me what happened in Chmeľnica at the turn of January and February 1945.¹²⁸

The Red Army did not arrive in Chmeľnica until military operations in this region were over. Both men remember it very vividly. It was the usual scenario: the repair of bridges in the locality, work for three weeks at the most. On 23 January 1945 almost all the young people in Chmeľnica were deported—forty-eight of them. The youngest was eighteen years old; Johann Jachmann was twenty-three. Five women were among the deportees. It seems that the deportation was organized by a partisan who spoke Polish and who wrote down the names of all the “recommended” people in the parish, mostly young people, and gave the list to the Russians. Jachmann remembers that the deportation began with a Red Army soldier coming to their home and telling him and his brother to put on better clothes and go to the local school. The Jachmann brothers were the first to arrive, but more and more people from Chmeľnica began to gather as the soldiers went round the parish and summoned people to go immediately to the school. They were held in the school for two or three days before being taken in two horse-drawn wagons to Sanok in Poland and from there to the Polish town of Nowy Sącz on the confluence of the Dunajec and the Poprad, a route taken by many of the deportees from Slovakia. The most frequently used transit camps were Sanok, Sambor (Ukrainian: Sambir) in Galicia in western Ukraine (especially notorious for its high mortality)

and Oświęcim (Auschwitz), the former Nazi extermination camp.¹²⁹ The people from Chmeľnica were then moved to the Bulanash camp, about 14 km from Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg). This camp figures frequently in the archives and in the memories of deportees. Johann Jachmann remembers that the journey took a long time and describes it as suffering which lasted about eighteen days, maybe a whole month, because they did not arrive in Bulanash until Easter. The only bright point in the tragedy was that the young people from Chmeľnica were all, male and female, in the same camp. Jachmann and Lang worked the whole time in the forest while some of the others worked on buildings or in the local *kolkhoz*. Those working in the forest took a field kitchen on which they cooked lunch—coarse meal mixed with water and warmed up a little. Mortality was high; typhus and other illnesses raged through the camp, people were exhausted and undernourished, and every day they brought their dead back from work to the camp. Mass graves accumulated round the camp. As far as the two friends can remember, only two of those deported from Chmeľnica died, which may just have been chance. But then, the deportation of the Chmeľnica people did not last as long as some others, either. On 12 October 1945 they were sent from Bulanash to their homeland, where they arrived in two groups on 14 and 15 December 1945. In the course of their return they were held for some time in a prisoner-of-war camp in Austria.

What the young people from Chmeľnica went through was terrible. The fact that of forty-eight deportees “only” two of them died in Bulanash cannot be taken as proof that “nothing much happened.” It is known that the most critical period of deportation was the journey and the first months in the camp, and that was the time when the most people died. The impact of stress, manipulation, inhuman treatment, sudden lack of basic nutrition and onset of slave labor was at its most traumatic early in the internment. If the group from Chmeľnica arrived in Bulanash at Easter and left in mid-October, they had spent something over half a year in the camp. In that time Jachmann, originally weighing 80 kg, shrank to a skeleton, weighing only 40 kg when he arrived home. It was in the first months that the loss of body mass was greatest. Almost all the deportees who came back weighed around 45–50 kg on their return home. That is evidently the limit to which a man can be starved and yet remain among the living. In the Gulag the process took place over a few months.

Both men remember that the Soviets treated them harshly, like prisoners of war or criminals. They told me they felt bitter when they saw Ger-

man prisoners of war in the camp who were evidently treated better—they looked healthier, received different food, and their uniforms were decent. We often come across such observations among former deportees; however, we must be careful how we evaluate such remarks. The German prisoners of war and those from other armies which had fought the Red Army were very cruelly treated. It is understandable that in a situation where the very necessities of life were missing, captives and prisoners were watchful of other groups and quick to observe whether some got better provisions than others or were favored in some way. Even a small advantage could save your life. The reports and analyses of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often refer to the fact that the German and Hungarian prisoners of war were repatriated earlier or were treated better than Czechoslovak citizens. Postwar moods were strongly anti-German. The feeling that the Germans should be punished, or that they had not been sufficiently punished, for causing World War II had its impact on many everyday situations, and was evident in attitudes toward Hungarians as well.

No one experienced the Gulag and returned without their health being damaged in some way. We mainly come across reports of chronic inflammation of the kidneys and urinary tracts (undoubtedly the consequence of the constant cold and damp), serious heart conditions, rheumatism, and serious damage to the stomach.

There was no hygiene, we were smitten with lice and fleas. The whole three years we slept on boards, without blankets or straw. Not until the fourth year did we receive blankets to cover ourselves. On 16 September 1948 they told us they were going to let us go, just as we were, dirty, destroyed and terribly ill—our whole bodies were swollen with water since our kidneys and chiefly hearts, owing to the lack of nutrition and vitamins and the cold, were so overtaxed we could not process that water.¹³⁰

The question is, what use were these wrecks of human beings to the Soviet economy? How effective could it be to deport a group of young people from Chmel'nica, if they were interned at the end of January and returned in mid-December the same year, having worked in the camp for only half a year, the rest of the time being on a transport to the camp and back? Surely, the mass deportations and endeavor to extract from people the maximum for the minimum investment could never succeed in doing what the Soviets wanted—to help their state toward economic prosperity.

However, the Soviet view of how they secured internees and prisoners of war in camps was markedly different, even in the times of *glasnost*, when such “blank areas” of history began to be filled in. In 1991 a noted

specialist journal published an article by a well-known Soviet military historian who affirmed that—unlike prisoners of war and interned civilians forced into slave labor in Germany who lived (according to the author) in “cannibalistic conditions” and “received inadequate rations of 150 to 250 g of ersatz bread and bowls of soup made from garbage”—prisoners of war and internees in Soviet camps lived and worked in very different conditions. The author writes that:

[T]he food was completely normal and adequate (during the war and up to 1948 prisoners of war and internees were often better fed than many Soviet citizens); they were allowed on average per person per day 600 g of bread, 40 g of meat, 120 g of fish or pickled herring, 20 g of sugar and other rations. Before release, a complete account was prepared for every prisoner of war or internee, and he was paid the whole compensation owed for work carried out in the Soviet Union, with a breakdown.¹³¹

The inhabitants of Chmeľnica are convinced up to this very day that they were released from the camp and repatriated thanks to the fact that the women and girls among them bribed the officers of the NKVD with money and food. They were then allowed to write a letter to Stalin in which they described their situation and the groundlessness of their abduction. However, although letters were sometimes successfully sent out of the Gulag, I very much doubt that Stalin would have received a letter from a camp and on the basis of this letter agreed to release the interned. It can be seen more as evidence of how people search for any way to return home, no matter what—for example, sacrificing their food so they could do something as apparently impossible as write to Stalin.

The Effort of Women from Stará Ľubovňa to Bring Their Husbands Home

On 25 January 1945, twenty inhabitants of the parish of Stará Ľubovňa were deported to the Soviet Union. All were taken to Bulanash in the Artyomovsk district of the Sverdlovsk Oblast in the Urals. The region around Stará Ľubovňa also suffered, according to a “list of twenty-six persons of the parish of Stará Ľubovňa and surroundings, taken by the Red Army and transported to the USSR, who have not yet returned.” This list is dated 12 December 1946.¹³² Emil Hermel later met a number of men from Stará Ľubovňa in the camp for those unable to work, Altynai near Yegorshino (Artyomovsk) no. 523/I.¹³³

The case of the deportees from Stará Ľubovňa is linked with one of the most energetic efforts for their release I came across. Their wives worked

out a very striking plan, and put their whole energy into it. I have been unable, from the surviving materials, to discover which woman initiated this plan. They approached the highest Czechoslovak authorities with a number of very resolute, well-argued letters signed by them all. The women from Stará Ľubovňa had a good grasp of the diplomatic procedures. Their letters were well-written and well-formulated, although at times emotion broke through the official language, which was quite understandable.

On 4 November 1946 the Ministry of National Defense approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a request and a list of interned persons from Stará Ľubovňa as the basis to intervene for their repatriation.¹³⁴ On 3 December 1946 the women of the parish wrote a collective request for the release of their husbands addressed directly to Stalin. They sent this to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, to be passed on to Moscow.¹³⁵ It is unlikely that the letter reached Stalin, but only the relevant archive in Russia would reveal this. However, because the letter went through the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, its existence during negotiations with the Soviet side could be used advantageously to emphasize the seriousness of the situation and to put more intensive pressure on the Soviet side. Not even this argument moved the Soviet authorities. They were plainly well aware that a letter from Slovakia signed by two dozen women was not the swallow that makes a summer.

In 1947, when this intervention failed to return their husbands, the women of Stará Ľubovňa turned for the support and assistance of President Edvard Beneš's wife, Hana Benešová, as a last chance. It is the only case I have come across where someone thought of asking Hana Benešová for help, though a case is recorded of women turning to Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Hana Benešová took on the case and through the Chancellor Jaromír Smutný requested the Soviet ambassador, V. A. Zorin, to intervene on behalf of the deported men.¹³⁶ I should add to the story of the women's initiative that according to some sources it was not twenty but thirty-eight men who were deported from Stará Ľubovňa, most of them belonging to the local intelligentsia. A suspicion arises as to whether the women's collective act was not on behalf of all the women in the town but just the intelligentsia. This should be verified.

Smutný used two routes to contact the Soviet representatives. He wrote to Zorin on 8 March 1947 and at the same time turned through the Foreign Ministry to the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow, although it was three months before his letter arrived. Counselor Kašpárek wrote to Smutný on

6 June 1947 that his letter dated 8 March had arrived at the embassy shortly before Ambassador Horák's departure on holiday, but Horák had still had time to get it translated into Russian, and for the embassy to intervene in this matter. Counselor Kašpárek now informed Smutný that he had sent the relevant memoranda to the MID and to the repatriation office through the Council of Ministers and he hoped that the men would soon return home, because several transports of prisoners and internees had returned quite recently and more were being prepared.¹³⁷

Smutný's letter, marked secret, was sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Moscow embassy by courier on 11 April. However, the memorandum Kašpárek sent to the MID is dated 4 June, which corresponds to Kašpárek's announcement on 6 June that he had carried out his task. We have no evidence of when Smutný's letter actually arrived in Moscow but there are two possibilities; either the letter arrived at the Moscow embassy much earlier and lay there neglected for weeks without anyone doing anything about it, or (which I think more likely) the long delay occurred in Prague. Ambassador Horák considered repatriation to be a priority and always acted promptly. In the covering letter from the ministry on 11 April is the note "lists sent already several times," which is, however, crossed out and the date 22 May 47 written in, probably by Horák himself. Maybe the lists were sent to Moscow without Smutný's letter, which was held up at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Either way, it is extraordinary that Smutný's letter with Hana Benešová's intervention took three months to get to Moscow. The women of Stará Ľubovňa invested their hopes in Hana Benešová's intercession, but the memorandum of 4 June makes no mention of the fact that the intervention was instigated by the wife of the president of Czechoslovakia. The memorandum is completely standard in its formulation and contains only the classic polite formulas and the usual request for the intercession of the MID with the relevant Soviet authorities concerning the release of the men listed. In the end, the enormous initiative of the Stará Ľubovňa women dwindled down to a routine memorandum in which neither Stará Ľubovňa nor Hana Benešová is mentioned. In the case of the "alternative route," i.e., via the embassy of the USSR in Prague, we do not know if Zorin ever passed Smutný's intervention on to Moscow. We have noted several times that he suppressed submissions even from the highest Czechoslovak authorities, i.e., he deliberately did not pass them on to his ministry. He could not have done this on his own authority; he must have been instructed to follow a policy of deliberately ignoring the highest authorities in Czechoslovakia. We cannot even be sure that Smutný's argument that he was writ-

ing at the request of Hana Benešová ever reached the Soviets. I have the feeling that the Soviet side never knew about it, because in his memorandum Smutný used only this very careful formulation:

According to our information these citizens were detained in the days after the liberation of Slovakia by the Red Army. There is considerable evidence that their detention occurred in most cases on the basis of unsubstantiated denunciations. In response to urgent requests and interventions of this kind I am asking you kindly to indicate to the appropriate authorities in the Soviet Union that they should speed up the completion of these and similar cases. It would be greatly appreciated if, in the case of persons about whom it can be ascertained there is no reason for their further detention, they could be released.¹³⁸

Further Collective Initiatives by Slovak Women and the Search for Influential Interventions

The women of Stará Ľubovňa were not the only ones who pooled their efforts to bring about the return of their husbands. Something similar was done by the women of Levoča, where fifty-seven men were abducted in three waves on 11 February, 18 March, and 8 April 1945 and taken to Yenakievo in the Donbas.¹³⁹ The women of Kežmarok put together a delegation which in December 1945 managed to reach President Beneš and Archbishop Beran. Apart from words of encouragement and comfort not even the president of the Republic nor Archbishop Beran could help the women to bring their husbands home.¹⁴⁰

It is noticeable that in later years—1949, 1950—the families of deportees and prisoners of war actively tried to obtain influential contacts who would intervene on behalf of their family members still held in the USSR. However, all attempts eventually ended in the same way at the Foreign Ministry and in the embassy files. Among those who turned to the Foreign Ministry with a request for decisive intervention were the Jednota slovanských žen v Československu (Union of Slavonic Women in Czechoslovakia)¹⁴¹ and the Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, Délégation en Tchécoslovaquie (International Red Cross Committee, Delegation in Czechoslovakia). The latter handed a request for intervention to the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the explanation: “There is no delegation in Russia.”¹⁴² The Československý ústav zahraniční (Czechoslovak Foreign Institute) also submitted a request for intervention on behalf of interned Czechoslovak citizens.¹⁴³

In the chapter on the screening of repatriates in Luisdorf I will quote an opinion that occasionally surfaces, that the repatriation of Slovaks from

camps in the Soviet Union succeeded in the end thanks to the energetic and tireless intervention of family members. I repeat that I do not share this opinion, and that I am persuaded that however convincing the arguments presented in letters from the family, and however energetic they were on behalf of the deportees, none of this made any impression on the Soviets. The Soviet Union decided to repatriate deportees only when it became apparent they were too physically exhausted to carry on working; their repatriation was then speeded up because the number of internees had to be reduced to meet the deadline for releasing all prisoners of war. In the end it was internal changes in the USSR after the death of Stalin that contributed to repatriation.

The Case of Ján Antal

Ján Antal is not in the true sense of the word a former abductee because he was born in the Gulag. However, even if not de jure, from the ethical point of view he should be considered a victim of deportation.

Antal's mother Irena Kavaschová (also Kawaschová) was a married woman with small children. She and her husband owned a wheelwright's workshop at the time she was abducted. Irena Kavaschová's story has also been told by Peter Juščák, whose interpretation in some details differs from the story as told to me by Ján Antal, although this does not diminish the tragedy of the story. According to Antal, Kavaschová's youngest child, Jožko, was seriously ill. He was hospitalized in Košice, and when the Red Army approached the city his worried mother set out there, even though she was pregnant at the time. She was stopped in Poprad and sentenced on the spot to eighteen years for espionage. Four-year-old Jožko died in the Košice hospital without his mother ever reaching him. An article by František Šebej "Tieň Kolymy"¹⁴⁴ tells the story of Irena Kawaschová a little differently; according to him, Irena Kawaschová (Kavašová) was held by the NKVD in Poprad, when she was returning home to Kežmarok from visiting her parents in Teplice nad Váhom. The train apparently only took her to Ružomberok, so from there to Liptovský Mikuláš she was given a ride in a German car and then continued on foot, with occasional lifts in farmers' wagons. It is difficult for us to judge which version comes closer to the truth, but that is not our aim.

Irena Kavaschová was deported to the Gulag in March 1945. She went into premature labor on the journey, but the child died immediately after birth (according to František Šebej, she was in the sixth month). Irena Kavaschová's sentence was the longest we have come across in this study,

and the place of her deportation conjures up the worst horrors. It is a camp whose name is in the general consciousness almost synonymous with the Gulag—Magadan. She was sent to the Elgen camp, Taskan-Rik district, belonging to the Magadan complex in the Khabarovskaya Oblast. Prisoners crossed the whole of Siberia in cattle cars, and were transported from Vladivostok to Kolyma by boat. Here on Kolyma they panned for gold in the extreme conditions of the permafrost. The daily norm was 2 grams of gold which all the prisoners had to fulfill, or be subject to sanctions. Irena Kavaschová spent nine years here; she survived and returned on 14 December 1953 in the amnesty following the death of Stalin. Not counting deportees of Russian ethnicity—the “white emigration”—she was one of the Czechoslovak citizens who spent the longest time in the Gulag.

Irena Kavaschová’s family had searched for her; her husband and his brother-in-law Jan Ganovský did everything they could, but found no trace because for the whole of her captivity Mrs. Kavaschová was forbidden to send even a line home. In the end her husband had her pronounced dead and remarried. The official date chosen for her death was 31 December 1945.

Kavaschová must have needed all her inner strength to come to terms with the situation when she returned in December 1953. It is said that her strong Christian faith helped her to survive. She was forty-six years old when she returned to a homeland where no one was expecting her, where they had given her up for dead, and where she learned that the child for whose sake she had set out to Košice was dead, and that her husband had a new family. With considerable effort she tracked down the official ruling so that “the fact that she had been pronounced dead was canceled.”¹⁴⁵

Irena Kavaschová had given birth to a son in the Gulag and the fact that he had immediately been taken from her and had disappeared into one of the Soviet children’s homes must have left a deep wound in her heart. Life for women in the camps was merciless; a number of specialist studies have been published on the theme in recent years.¹⁴⁶ To go through pregnancy and give birth must have been an incredible test. The chances that a woman in labor, and especially the child, would survive were minimal. The son born to Irena Kavaschová on 24 February 1950 was small and weak and survived only thanks to the fact that in his first weeks, before being taken to a children’s home, he was nursed by a Russian woman from a nearby village.

Once Kavaschová had returned to Czechoslovakia she immediately began to search for her son, and it was miraculous that in the end he was found—with the help of the Czechoslovak Red Cross—in a children’s

home in Moscow. The Czechoslovak Red Cross rarely succeeded in finding anyone in the Soviet Union (mainly because of the lack of cooperation from its Soviet partner which did not even reply to official correspondence), but it was unusually successful in finding this child. The child was Ján Antal, with whom I talked. He does not remember much about the children's home—he was born in 1950 and was five years old when returned to his mother. What he mostly remembers is the floury gruel with suet they were given and a few details about the journey to Czechoslovakia in a military transport, with a small toy in his hand.

Irena Kavaschová remarried and her husband accepted her son as his own. When Ján married he took the name of his wife, which is why he is called Antal. Irena Kavaschová died on 22 November 1990, and though she suffered from ill health in her final years, at least she lived to see the fall of the regime that had caused her so much suffering.

The fate of Irena Kavaschová and the effort of her son Ján Antal to find an answer to the fundamental question of his life, whether he was conceived out of love or hate, was treated in the documentary film *Můj otec Gulag* (My Father the Gulag) by director František Palonder. The film crew traveled with Ján Antal to Kolyma, to the place where Irena Kavaschová was once imprisoned and where Ján Antal was born. The film was five full years in the making and was released in 2008. Since then it has been shown at a number of festivals of documentary films and won several prizes, for example, at Jeden Svět (One World), Prague, in 2008, and at the Zolotoj Buben Festival, Slovakia, in 2009. It was a great honor for me to have shared it in a small way.

The Death of Vladimír Tomiška

One of the individual cases to be resolved after many decades was the sad death of Vladimír Tomiška.¹⁴⁷

Vladimír Tomiška was born on 30 October 1926, and was thus one of the youngest deportees. He was only eighteen when he was abducted. The Tomiška family came from Hlinsko and at the beginning of the 1930s moved to Bratislava where Vladimír's father established himself as a furrier. They also kept a boarding house in Trenčianské Teplice. Vladimír Tomiška became involved in the Slovak National Uprising where he acted as liaison with the partisan brigade of Jan Žižka, and at the end of January 1945 succeeded in getting from the mountains to Bratislava. On 2 April 1945, he went with his father by train to Trenčianské Teplice, where his family was then living. In Trnava the train was stopped by the Red Army. Father and son were apprehended and transported to Čejkovice in Moravia. After some time they released the father, apparently because of his poor state of health, but the son was deported without trace.

Up to this point the story resembled other family tragedies. Vladimír's family tried to find him, turning to the Foreign Ministry and the Office of the President. They were informed by the ministry on the basis of information from the Soviets that he could not be traced on the territory of the USSR.

Vladimír had a sister called Eva. The brother and sister had always been close and Eva took her brother's disappearance badly. For years she kept hoping that maybe he would return one day. Immediately after the fall of Communism in 1989, Eva Demková (her married name), hoping that her brother might still be alive somewhere in Siberia, renewed the search for him. She was greatly helped by the Russian organization Memorial, founded in January 1989 as a historical and educational society. It has done good service in researching, documenting and publicizing the Stalinist repressions. Memorial is mostly known for its activity in revealing the truth about the Katyn' massacre, but it also carried out valuable work on the fates of individuals. Eva Demková remembers that a reply came very quickly from Memorial. The search moved ahead and in 1991 the Czechoslovak Red Cross told her about the tragic death of her brother.

It seems that on 9 June 1945 Vladimír Tomiška was sentenced to death according to paragraph 58-6 no. 1 UK RSFR (*Ugolovny kodeks* RSFSR) on suspicion of espionage. However, on 11 July 1945, the punishment was changed to fifteen years in a correction center. The stress which the nineteen-year-old underwent must have been terrible, as were the conditions in which he found himself. The Czechoslovak Red Cross wrote that on 19 July 1945 Vladimír Tomiška died in the Nizhne-Amursky camp, in the Komsomolsk district in the Khabarovsk Oblast near the village of Pivan' at Kun Station. Eva Demková even received precise information about his grave—her brother had been buried in the cemetery of the 5th Department of this camp. In a memorandum of 20 May 1992 from the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow, in which Mrs. Demková was informed of the complete rehabilitation of her brother, the date of death is given as 11 June 1946. This would mean that Vladimír Tomiška survived a year in the camp. Whether the mistake was in the letter from the Czechoslovak Red Cross or in that from the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow (possibly originating from incorrect data in the Russian archive), it does not alter the tragedy of the story.

This information was confirmed by the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow in 1992. The same year Eva Demková received confirmation from the procurator general of the Russian Federation dated 23 April 1992, whereby Vladimír Tomiška was rehabilitated as a victim of the

Stalinist repression. The letter even contained some of his personal effects. Eva Demková received his personal documents and photographs of their mother, his girlfriend and other friends which he must have had on him when he was arrested and which had lain forty-five years in the Soviet archives.

I have gone into this case in detail in order to record how much ill will, reluctance to act, negligence, and pomposity of power there was in the Soviet authorities. They failed to respond to the family's request, even though they had the information at their disposal. How else can it be explained, when after so many decades the information was suddenly available, and Tomiška's personal effects could be produced? Apart from this, the Soviet authorities must have knowingly lied when they said that no trace of him could be found on the territory of the Soviet Union. The dashing of a hopeful human life at the moment when the war is ending is always a tragic story, and sentencing a nineteen-year-old to death on suspicion of espionage without proof is an eloquent example of the methods used by the Soviet Union.

Other Examples

The circumstances of deportation are so irrevocably engraved in the minds of those affected that even after many years people can recount the exact details. For example, Mrs. Lichvárová of Košice wrote to me:

On 23 January 1945 my husband and I were sweeping away the snow in front of our house, 102 Karpatská Street in Košice, when Mr. Hopko and Mr. Šajna, whom my husband knew personally, called and asked him to go with them to the abattoir to help slaughter some pigs. They also called on our immediate neighbor, the unfortunate Štefan Sopka.¹⁴⁸

Everything followed the standard scenario. All the men ended in the cellar of No. 1 Rázusova Street, of which many still have unpleasant memories. There they were interrogated by Russian-speaking officers and told they were going to work in the Soviet Union "for a few days." After that they were taken in cattle trucks and partly on foot to the Donbas, to Yenakievo, to the Junkom mine. Mr. Lichvár was fortunate to survive and return home. We cannot add "safe and well" because he was at the end of his physical strength. Lichvár was in the Donbas a month short of a year, returning on 6 December 1945. During this time he had lost 50 kg. It was a long time before he recovered.

František Strömpl suffered a tragic fate. He was born in October 1922 and died in the first months of deportation on 16 March 1945. The sources show that he was probably a father of a child who grew up as an orphan. Albín Schünger of Medzev was even younger when he was deported. Born at the end of September 1927, he was just over seventeen. Another very young deportee was Vladimír Pavle of Bratislava—a year older than Schünger, he was deported shortly after his eighteenth birthday. One of the youngest deportees to die in the Gulag and of whose fate we have no closer information was Ludovít Šufliarsky, born 22 October 1926, deported from Banská Bystrica on 15 May 1945. He died about a year later in April 1946, in the Polovinka camp in the north Urals in the Molotov (currently Perm) Oblast.¹⁴⁹

Ivan Kianička from Žilina was a student not yet twenty years old. Apparently he crossed over to the Red Army on the order of the commander of the local partisans but was interned and deported to the USSR. According to documents in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry this happened to other people, too: the student Anton Kyšek, the electro-technician Miroslav Bagár (also given as Anton Kiška and Milan Bagár) and the teacher Ivan Kvasnica were active in the Slovak National Uprising. On the orders of the partisans' commander they crossed over to the Red Army, which, however, interned and deported them.¹⁵⁰

The farmer Ján Kudl'a, mayor of his parish, is said to have helped the partisans during the Uprising and was imprisoned by the Gestapo. However, after the advance of the Red Army he was accused of collaboration with the Germans and deported to the Soviet Union.¹⁵¹ Štefan Krajňák was forty years old when deported to the Soviet Union. He was the breadwinner for seven children aged between two and fourteen and was also looking after his eighty-year-old mother. His deportation left his family in a desperate situation because his wife was unable to feed the family on her own.¹⁵² Jozef Krotký, a teacher, had been visiting his brother, Professor Karšai, in Liptovský Mikuláš and was returning home after the Red Army had entered the town. He was stopped by the Red Army, accused of espionage and deported to the Soviet Union.¹⁵³

The story of Ondrej Látran from the parish of Bot'any in the district of Kráľovský Chlmec had a relatively happy end. Látran was born in Bot'any and had spent his whole life in his native parish and, under the Hungarian regime, was not a member of any political party. He was detained on 2 December 1944 but released from the Ivotokhov-Detkon camp on 20 August 1946 and returned home. The chairman of the Senate of the Regional Court in Levoča, František Garanský, publicly refused to join the Hlinka

Guard and was known locally as a dedicated democrat. He was deported to the Soviet Union and was there from 11 March 1945 to 21 September 1947. He, too, was fortunate in surviving the Gulag and returning to his homeland.¹⁵⁴

There were cases where people returning from the Nazi concentration camps immediately found themselves in Soviet camps. That was what happened to Dr. Mikuláš Goldberger. As a Jew, Dr. Goldberger had been detained and sent to a concentration camp in Poland where fortunately he escaped death; however, when the Red Army liberated the camp they sent him directly to the Gulag, to a camp in Siberian Omsk called Solgament, number 35/b.¹⁵⁵ Michal Jurek of Hranovnica u Popradu, forty years old in 1945, was arrested by the Gestapo and found himself in a Nazi concentration camp from which he was, after the arrival of the Red Army, deported directly to camp no. 232 in the town of Stryi in the Droghobych (currently Drohobych) region in Ukraine.¹⁵⁶

Vendelín Javorek originally came from Ružomberok, where he was born in 1882. As a craftsman he made his way as far as China, but at the end of the war was in Chernivtsy where he was interned by the Red Army and deported to Potma in Mordovia in the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁷

Of all the deported women, Olga R. suffered one of the worst fates, excepting maybe Irena Kavaschová. The Red Army captured her when she was a university student. Olga survived ten years in the camps but was not allowed home even during the amnesty declared after the death of Stalin (thanks to which many of the deported found their way home, including Irena Kavaschová). Olga suffered another four years exile before she could go home.¹⁵⁸

3. Prisoners of War, Auxiliary Help and the *Levente*

The Men from the Parish of Zeleneč

The story of the men deported from the parish of Zeleneč in the district of Trnava is relatively happy. There were fourteen of them, the eldest born in 1913 and the youngest in 1923. Their repatriation was likewise the goal of an energetic and coordinated campaign by their mothers and wives.¹⁵⁹ The wives' letters to the Foreign Ministry in Prague and the Commissariat of the Interior in Bratislava were written in perfect Russian. I think that in this case the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow or even the Foreign Ministry made a bigger effort than in the case of the men from Stará Ľubovňa and translated all the materials, including the letters from the wives, into Russian. All the men—Michal Bobek, František Červenka, Teofil Kotásek, Pavel Vavro, Štefan Dorotka, Cyril Dudáš, Jozef Čuperka, Timotej Valovič, Vít Novanský (b. 1918), Jozef Novanský (b. 1921), František Augustin, František Drobný, Michal Hradský and Josef Zápražný—were deported to the mines near Stalino in the Donbas, camp no. 21. On 20 March 1946 the local notary in Zeleneč wrote personally to Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk to say that they had all “returned in a relatively good state of health.”¹⁶⁰ I am writing about this case in some detail, as proves easily how civilians fell into the category of prisoners of war.

It seems that the men of Zeleneč should have reported to Trnava on 23 January 1945 on the basis of a call-up from the wartime Slovak regime, but escaped and went home. They were forced to return to Trnava under the threat of severe sanctions on their families and were locked up as punishment for having escaped. The prison was under German guard. From here the Zeleneč men were, just as they came from home, without uniforms or weapons, taken by armed German guards in sealed railcars to Hungary for defense work. When the Red Army was approaching, the group decided to surrender. For three months the Zeleneč men “lived and worked alongside the Red Army soldiers, relations were friendly and they were promised that they would return to their own country.” After three months in the camp in Sighet, they were declared to be prisoners of war and taken in closed railcars to Focșani and then to Constanța in Romania. From there they sailed to Novorossiysk where they worked for several days in a foundry before being taken to Novy Donbas in the Dobropil's'ky district in the south-western part of Donetsk Oblast in eastern Ukraine. There they joined other Slovaks of whom there were apparently around 1,500, with an unknown number of Slovaks in a neighboring camp. The

writer of the letter says that about a month after their arrival the Ruthenians and Romanians were released, leaving only the Slovaks. Five hundred of them were too ill to work and were sent back home.

The Zeleneč case was the subject of a letter from a Mr. Lisický whose son, already 50 years old, was among the deported. On 18 March 1945 Josef Lisický (the son) was taken by the Germans for fortification work in the Balaton region in Hungary but on 22 March succeeded in deserting to the Russians. He was in a camp for prisoners of war Sighet until 1 July 1945 when all the prisoners of war were taken to the USSR. They reached Novy Donbas after great hardships and were set to work in the mines. A repatriation transport left their camp on 10 October with those who were so ill they could no longer work. Lisický (the father) wrote that one of those who returned was his neighbor, and so he went to see if he had news of his son. The man was in bed, so weakened by his experiences that he could scarcely speak. Some days later he died. In spite of his condition the neighbor had tried to give Lisický news of the kind of place in which his son was imprisoned. Apparently around 850 persons traveled from the camp in Sighet in eighteen or nineteen stock cars which were kept locked. Many fell ill because of the terrible heat during the long journey via Constanța to Novorossiysk and on to the Donbas. The scanty food meant that they were already weakened when they reached their goal. The next day they were forced to work in the mines. They worked 1,500 m underground, lived in camps behind barbed wire and were guarded as they walked to work. The food was inadequate, they were not given any warm clothing, and they were consequently debilitated and chilled through. There were accidents in the mines every day and many Slovaks died there or on the way home.

The news about the conditions under which his son was working, together with the state in which his neighbor had come home, deeply shocked Mr. Lisický. It impelled him to strive for effective action, and he wrote to the Commissariat of the Interior using the following arguments:

I experienced the Russian Revolution. I was in Russia for four years and played an active role in the revolution. My son never heard me criticize the Russian nation. I even considered Russia my second country, which is why my son fled from German forced labor to his Russian brothers, to whom he looked for protection.¹⁶¹

Even though Mr. Lisický had known Russia so well during World War I and brought his son up to think well of the Russian nation, it made no difference to his son's repatriation.

At the beginning of November 1945 the Foreign Ministry referred to the group of deported as a case of around 800 Slovaks who were originally soldiers in the Slovak Army but deserted. They were seized by the Germans who put them into uniform and organized them into working divisions which were sent to Hungary to dig trenches and build fortifications. The men were captured by the Red Army and, in the weeks immediately after the end of the war, sent to the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow was instructed to ask for their release, part of the argument being that members of the Hungarian Army who had been captured at the same time had already been released.

Ambassador Horák always focused on the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens and never left any case pending. He received the instruction on 9 November 1945, and within three days had an appointment with the Deputy of the Soviet People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs Vyshinsky. Afterwards, he wrote to tell Masaryk and Clementis that he had put pressure on Vyshinsky by telling him that "these people had committed nothing against the Soviets, since they had deserted from the German Army, thus demonstrating their unwillingness to fight against a Slavonic empire, but had been unfortunate in being seized by the Germans." Vyshinsky ignored this reasoning. However, he recognized the basic principle—perhaps we can better say he made a note of it—and promised an early investigation of the whole matter and an eventual decision.¹⁶²

More Intervention Initiatives

Another energetic intervention was launched by the wives of fourteen officers of the Slovak Army, linked by the fact that their husbands had listened to the appeals of the Slovak National Council and presented themselves to the investigating committee in Turčianský Sv. Martin. There they were allegedly stripped of their belongings and handed over to the Soviet authorities, who deported them to the Soviet Union via the former Nazi concentration camp Oświęcim (Auschwitz). The women wrote insistently about the illegality of this abduction to all the commissariats and ministries concerned. The first reply came from the Ministry of National Defense, saying that those who had actively fought against the Red Army were considered to be prisoners of war, but that there were genuine errors and injustices. The wives of the deported officers did achieve one aim, in that the Foreign Ministry constantly made interventions for them, but this did not bring any positive result.¹⁶³ I have found no evidence of the return of this group, and if the fourteen officers did return,

then it was as part of the repatriation campaign which was fully under the control of the Soviet Union.

The parishes of Šíd and Čamovce (Hungarian: Síd and Csoma) in southern Slovakia are frequently mentioned in archive documents. Many men from Šíd were in camps in the Soviet Union, most of them prisoners of war from the Hungarian Army. Their lists, which were compiled by the Local Office of Associated Commissions (Obvodný úrad sdružených komisií) in Šíd, have survived. Apparently all the men in Csoma had to join the Hungarian Army and many of them were captured. I have been unable to obtain a comprehensive overview of all the prisoners of war from this parish, but have made a provisional record of these men from Csoma held in Russia or Hungary:

Caba Stefan, b. 1916, Csoma, held in Russia, 1942
 Caba Ondrej, b. Csoma, held in Sighet, 1944
 Conka Jan, b. 1925, held in Russia, 1942
 Csomós Barnabáš, b. Csoma, on the list of deported citizens from Blh
 Dani Dezider, b. 1923, Csoma, held in Russia, 1942
 Dani Ondrej, b. 1905, Csoma, held in Hungary, 1943
 Bockai Stefan, b. 1923, Csoma, held in Hungary
 Balaz Stefan, b. 1915, Csoma, held in Hungary, 1944
 Balaz Jozef, b. Csoma, held in Russia, 1943
 Balaz Alexander, b. Csoma, held in Russia, 1943
 Balaz Vojtech, b. Csoma, held in Budapest, 1942
 Balint Mede, b. Csoma, held in Budapest, 1942
 Balog Jozef, b. Csoma, held in Budapest, 1944
 Kandela Jozef, b. 1922, Csoma, held in Hungary, 1944
 Kassa František, b. 1920, Csoma, held in Russia, 1943
 Králik Jozef, b. 1909, Csoma, held in Russia, 1943
 Loska Ľudovít, b. 1912, Csoma, held in Russia, 1945
 Olah Koloman, b. Csoma, held in Russia, 1943
 Pal Tibor, b. Csoma, held in Russia, 1944
 Petik Jan, b. Csoma, held in Russia, 1945
 Petik František, b. Csoma, 1922, held in Romania, 1943
 Pocos Jozef, b. Csoma, held in Russia, 1944
 Sokantor Jozef, b. Csoma, 1910, held in Russia, 1942
 Virog Štefan, b. 1913, Csoma, held in Russia, 1943

Mrs. Zborovjanová, whose husband Jozef was one of the prisoners of war in the USSR, wrote on behalf of the wives of this large group of deportees. The names of some of the men from Csoma whom she was trying to get repatriated are listed in her correspondence with Minister of National Defense Ľudvík Svoboda in spring 1946.

Many officers and soldiers of the Slovak Army who had left the army in the final stages of the war in Slovakia were interned by the Soviet au-

thorities just as if they had been apprehended bearing weapons, and were deported as prisoners of war to the Soviet Union. Since they had been civilians when captured, their families intervened for them in the same way as they did for civilian deportees and the local police stations or local authorities recorded them as such. Nevertheless, after the fall of Communism these people were not considered to be deported civilians and were not entitled to the compensation legislated for civilians.

Work on fortifications and other auxiliary work was undertaken by men of every age, including former soldiers of the Slovak Army who had returned home in the last months of the war. In the Soviet Union they found themselves in camps reaching from the Donbas to Arkhangelsk. There are a number of repatriation documents which give similar circumstances of deportation; I will mention just a few. Pavol Jamárik (also given as Jahárik), who was born on 2 January 1920 in Kunova, was taken to work in Hungary and thus became a prisoner of war after the arrival of the Red Army, ending in the same camp as many others—lager no. 21 in Novy Donbas in the Stalino district.¹⁶⁴ Jaroslav Kuťák was deported by the Germans to a work camp in Germany where he was taken prisoner by the Red Army because “he did not have Russian papers,” but in the end reached the repatriation camp in Odessa; I assume he was then repatriated.¹⁶⁵ Pavel Harkáni (b. 1904) was likewise a civilian abducted to Hungary for fortification work who ended in a camp in the Arkhangelsk Oblast. He survived deportation and returned home.¹⁶⁶ Requests for repatriation came from the parish of Rad (current district Trebišov), in the first case for twenty-eight men, then thirteen, then another nine. They were called for “work following the passage of the front” on 22 July 1944 and consequently fell into the hands of the Red Army as prisoners of war. An important argument in all these requests is that the men are from families which had requested “re-Slovakization.”¹⁶⁷

Some young people in their final years of secondary school met a tragic fate. In the tense atmosphere of the last days of the Slovak state, defending itself against the inevitable advance of the Red Army, they were called from their school desks to work on fortifications or as watchmen, and known as *Levente*. They were usually captured by the Red Army or seized at home without having been involved in military operations. In many cases people’s sons were denounced by their neighbors. These youths, not yet eighteen years old, spent years in the Gulag as prisoners of war or after having been convicted of hostile activities against the Soviet Union. There were many such cases.

Two of these youths were Pavel Burjeta¹⁶⁸ and the better-known Ján Košút, born 26 August 1926 in Víglaš and a secondary school pupil at the end of the war. Ján Košút was mobilized into the auxiliary section of the Slovak Army, his task being to guard a bridge. After the advance of the Red Army he fled home, was captured and sentenced to ten years forced labor, most of which he spent in the grim Arkhangelsk Oblast. The Czechoslovak authorities intervened for him but the Soviet Union refused to release him because allegedly he had been an enemy agent and scout in the rear of the Red Army. Ján Košút survived deportation and lived to see the fall of Communism. He published his testament of the inhumanity which destroyed his youth as *Cez červený očištec* (Through the Red Purge).¹⁶⁹ Ján Košút's fate had something in common with that of Dušan Slobodník. Ján Košút, to a lesser degree, found himself criticized in the press when, in the 1990s, a debate flared up about how active these young men had been in the military operations of the wartime Slovak regime.

Students from Banská Bystrica and Zvolen, and the Case of Dušan Slobodník

Dušan Slobodník (1927–2001) was a Slovak writer, poet and translator whose books began to be published in the mid-1970s. In 1991 he published *Paragraf: Polárny kruh* (Paragraph: Arctic Circle), in which he described his deportation to the Soviet Union and his years in the Gulag.¹⁷⁰ From 1992 to 1994 he was minister of culture in Vladimír Mečiar's government. Mečiar, three times prime minister of Slovakia after the fall of Communism, was a controversial personality. In the international democratic context he had a reputation as a politician with an inclination toward authoritative behavior, nationalism, and misusing the media. Mečiar's name is linked with the division of Czechoslovakia which took place at the turn of 1992/1993, and in which Slobodník played a significant role.

From autumn 1944 the Slovak regime had, in preparation for the approach of the Red Army, reinforced the Hlinka Guard and legalized the forced participation of the civilian population for fortification work. In this terminal phase of its existence the Slovak state was using the graduates from training courses for the Hlinka Guard, the Hlinka Youth and the Home Guard. Selected students, members of the Hlinka Youth, were sent there when called up. Such courses prove that the wartime regime of the Slovak state was not prepared for the transformation of Slovakia into the postwar order of Europe, and still thought in terms of Germany being the

guarantor of an independent Slovakia. According to Ján Korček,¹⁷¹ graduates of the training courses of the Hlinka Guard, Hlinka Youth, and Home Guard held in Sekule, Malacky, Jakubov, Trenčianské Teplice and Vizovice, were engaged on the southern sections of the front facing the Red Army and took part in attacks against partisans in Moravia. The final action was a crash course in Sekule from 28 February to 10 March 1945, on which Dušan Slobodník was sent. Early in 1945 the head of the intelligence unit of the command quarters of the Hlinka Youth, Dr. Ladislav Jankovič, began to prepare members to leave the country, with the intention of maintaining a unified organization of the Hlinka Youth outside. False documents from the Slovak National Council were prepared and handed out to graduates of the Higher Leadership School of the Hlinka Youth and intelligence courses. They were to be evacuated in mid-March 1945, in the direction of Moravia and South Bohemia and from there to Austria.¹⁷² A serious incident in which the participants in the Sekule course were involved was a massacre of twenty four inhabitants of the hamlet of Ploština near Vizovice in Moravia by the Nazis on 19 April 1945 for their support of the partisans. (On Slobodník's unproved participation see later.)

Dušan Slobodník was one of twenty-one gymnasium (secondary school) pupils from Zvolen and Banská Bystrica who, in the second half of April 1945, were captured and sentenced to deportation and fifteen to twenty years of forced labor in the USSR for their participation in these courses. In Slobodník's case, this was a crash course in Sekule. Not even interventions from the highest Czechoslovak authorities could move the Soviet Union to release this group. Dušan Slobodník was one of the youngest, barely eighteen years old, when he was deported. He spent nearly nine years in the Gulag, returning in December 1953. Later he appealed to the Supreme Court of the USSR for rehabilitation and on 1 October 1960 was fully rehabilitated by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR.

Slobodník's mother, Irena Kováčová, was extremely active in working for the release of this group of students. Unlike the other parents, she was well acquainted with official procedures and had influential connections. In 1946 she tried to obtain an entrée to the Soviet authorities through Klement Gottwald, head of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and deputy prime minister. She was supported by the regional secretariat of the Communist Party of Slovakia in Banská Bystrica, who testified that Dušan Slobodník and his mother, an active Communist, had taken part in the resistance and sheltered four partisans from the Gestapo. None of this was of any avail.¹⁷³

On 31 March 1947 the Cabinet of Deputy Prime Minister Ján Ursíni sent a request for repatriation for the twenty-one school pupils from Banská Bystrica and Zvolen through the Foreign Ministry to the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. They managed to find out what had happened to twelve of them (one had died, four had been sentenced to periods from fifteen to twenty years, some were in Arkhangelsk, others in the Krasnoyarsk district, in Norilsk and by the Kara Sea). A special intervention was made for Vladimír Lupták (b. 1925) in that he had never been a member of any Fascist organization; on the contrary, he had fought in the resistance. The whereabouts of the rest were not known. Meanwhile, on 26 December 1946, Dušan Slobodník sent a message that he was on the North Pechora Railway, Mikun' Station, Shezham Military Hospital, Komi Republic. It took three months for Slobodník's message to arrive in Slovakia. On 10 July 1947 the district secretariat of the Communist Party of Slovakia requested an intervention on Dušan Slobodník's behalf by the Foreign Ministry. In 1948 the parents of the whole group turned again to Klement Gottwald, by that time president.¹⁷⁴

Shortly after Dušan Slobodník became minister of culture in Mečiar's government in 1992, the Slobodník–Feldek case erupted. It was well covered by the Czech as well as the Slovak press, and a heated public discussion reflected the topicality of the issue. The case dragged on for several years after the breakup of Czechoslovakia. I am briefly outlining this case as it provides extra information about a particular aspect of the deportations, and at the same time shows the difficulty of coming to terms with a complicated past.

The Slobodník–Feldek case began when the Slovak poet Ľubomír Feldek (b. 1936) publicly drew attention to the problematic past of Dušan Slobodník. Slobodník reacted by suing Feldek for defamation of character. Whereas the Municipal Court in Bratislava at first decided in Feldek's favor, in 1994 the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic supported Slobodník's appeal. Dušan Slobodník argued that Feldek's accusation was politically motivated.¹⁷⁵ Feldek was ordered to pay a large amount of damages. A collection was arranged by Charter 77, and the sum paid by the businessman Fidelis Schlée, a prominent figure in Czech business in the first half of the 1990s.

Feldek, represented by the prominent Slovak lawyer and politician Ernest Valko, lodged a complaint with the European Court for Human Rights in Strasburg. This did not concern the Feldek–Slobodník conflict, but was rather a complaint by Feldek against the Slovak Republic. In 2001 the European Court for Human Rights decided in Ľubomír Feldek's favor;

the Slovak Republic had to pay him damages for moral detriment, and cover a considerable sum in legal costs. Ľubomír Feldek chose Czech citizenship and since then has been living in Prague and in Bratislava.

The dispute about Slobodník triggered considerable publicity. In July and August 1992 the Czech newspaper *Lidové noviny* ran several articles supported by archive documents. These consisted of memoranda from the Archive of the Ministry of the Interior which had been made available to *Lidové noviny* by the publicist and journalist Roman Cílek. Slobodník reacted to the publication of these documents by saying that they were indeed authentic but that the information in them was distorted. According to Slobodník, after the end of World War II and in an attempt to persuade the Soviet Union to repatriate the deported school pupils (including Slobodník), the Foreign Ministry had written on purpose that the pupils had, as participants in the course at Sekule, taken part in the murders in Ploština. Slobodník produced evidence that he had not been involved in the Ploština murders.

Jan Šubert wrote an article for *Lidové noviny*, “The Errors of Minister Slobodník,”¹⁷⁶ saying that he did not accept Dušan Slobodník’s arguments, but could substantiate the imprecise interpretation of the documents. He had analyzed them and reached the opinion that the participants in the course in Sekule had been evacuated to the Vizovice region of Moravia and had been involved in violence at the very end of the war. They were responsible for the shooting of two Czech partisans in the Sovovka forest near Vizovice. Šubert was able to provide the names of the three participants from the Sekule training course who had committed this crime, but wrote that they were not members of the group deported to the USSR and there was no proof that Slobodník had taken part in this crime.

In 2003 *Ploština – krvavá paseka* (Ploština—The Bloodstained Forest Clearing), a documentary film by Jan Novák, was shown on Czech television. Its aim was to examine an event which had become part of the Communist legend of cooperation between the Czech and Slovak partisans, the Soviet partisan commanders, and the local population. However, this documentary said nothing about the participants in the terrorist course in Sekule, nor did it mention the fact that the Ploština massacre was portrayed as the one in Ladislav Mňačko’s novel *Smrt si říká Engelchen* (Death Is Called Engelchen, 1959). Nor was it mentioned that after the war the Czech Communists released the commander of the attack on Ploština, Werner Tutter, who later worked for them in Germany as a spy. On the other hand, the film showed convincingly how the chief agent of the Gestapo among the partisans in Ploština, Vladimír Hájek, success-

fully adapted to the new postwar conditions. He became one of the most prominent Communist leaders in the Zlín region and a major organizer of the act of remembrance at Ploština.

Ladislav Mňačko also expressed an opinion.¹⁷⁷ (Mňačko [1919–1994] was a reporter, journalist and writer who rejected his original belief in Communism and became one of its fiercest critics. After the 1968 Soviet invasion he went into exile in Austria, returning to Czechoslovakia after the fall of Communism.) He stated categorically that the participation of Slobodník in the murder of the cottagers in Ploština was nonsense, and that to accuse Slobodník of having participated in this massacre was “a scandalous personal attack, in no way supported by the facts.” Mňačko writes that even though the eighteen-year-old Slobodník must have been aware of what kind of course he was attending in Sekule, he cannot be described as a Fascist for that reason: “As a former Communist, weighed down by personal guilt, I don’t feel I have the right to accuse anyone who at the age of eighteen was recruited onto a course destined to be a failure.” Mňačko distanced himself from the petition organized against Slobodník, and also disagreed with an article published by Josef Škvorecký in the *New York Times* about Slobodník’s Fascist involvement.

The polemic continued. The influential *Literárny týždenník* spoke up in support of Slobodník, publishing archival documents which demonstrated that the accusations against him were unfounded—such as a memorandum of the Commissariat of the Interior in Bratislava confirming that Slobodník had behaved correctly, and also that his mother “had always been occupied in the underground and was now a conscientious worker cooperating with the Communist Party program.” The Slovak Association for those Forcibly Abducted (Slovenská asociácia násilne odvedených, SANO), whose first president was Slobodník, stood behind him,¹⁷⁸ while Štefan Pazdera, founder of the Center of the Confederation of Political Prisoners in Prešov, was, on the contrary, strongly opposed to Slobodník. A journalist by the name of P. Černocký wrote some hostile articles for the Czech newspaper *Metropolitan*. These later appeared on the Internet as reprints from an almost unknown and short-lived periodical.¹⁷⁹

One voice compared Slobodník with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn on the basis of the fact that they were both prisoners in the Gulag and both wrote a book about it—Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, part of which Slobodník translated, and Slobodník his *Paragraph: Arctic Circle*. A critical voice immediately spoke out, insisting that this was an insult to Solzhenitsyn because Solzhenitsyn was deported to the Gulag directly from the front on the grounds that he had criticized Stalin’s regime in his

letters, and remained throughout his life a principled critic of Communism. Slobodník, meanwhile, had cooperated with both the Fascist and the Communist regimes. During Communism he had translated an anti-Solzhenitsyn pamphlet and lectured against Solzhenitsyn in the House of Czechoslovak–Soviet Friendship, and yet immediately after the fall of Communism he had translated *The Gulag Archipelago*. This standpoint was rejected by the other side as the typical unfounded and superficial impressions of people unwilling to accept evidence of Slobodník's innocence.¹⁸⁰ On balance, even though Slobodník's innocence in the matter of the murders in Ploština was proved, he was still seen to be implicated in the crime, because his fellow students on the course in Sekule did take part in the massacre. When, after the Velvet Revolution, Dušan Slobodník became minister of culture in Slovakia, his membership of the Hlinka Youth alone made him ineligible in the eyes of many people. It was claimed that Slobodník was unacceptable because "in the person of Minister Slobodník, Slovakia is discredited as a state, in that a representative of the Slovak state is a Fascist."¹⁸¹ Some even interpreted the conflict as one between supporters of the federation (of the Czech and Slovak Republics) and the "real Slovak patriots."¹⁸²

II. OTHER DEPORTATIONS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO THE USSR

1. The Deportation of Émigrés from Russia and Ukraine and the Forced Repatriation of Soviet Citizens

Breakdown of Deportations by Territory

The deportations of those known as the White Émigrés have been the subject of detailed studies since the fall of Communism. The results of this research have been published and the issue taken up by the mass media and general public. I will therefore not cover these deportations and diplomatic negotiations in detail, but neither can I completely ignore this element of deportations from Czechoslovakia. I will devote this section of my work mainly to a summary of published research on the subject of deported members of the Russian and Ukrainian emigration to which I will add some notes and appendices. I refer primarily to the works of Vladimír Bystrov and the “They Were the First” (Oni byli první) Committee, which can be found in the bibliography.

The deportations of members of the Russian and Ukrainian emigration took place mainly from Czech territory. Bohemia and Moravia did not suffer from mass deportations of the local population; there were only occasional individual cases often difficult to ascertain and quite scattered. Unlike Slovakia, these deportees were for the most part of German ethnicity or lived in the Sudetenland or in areas with a large German population. When we come across people being repatriated from the Czech lands in the files, they are mostly German prisoners of war. There are exceptions; one such, an example of pure error and arbitrariness, was the case of Bedřich Horník of Moravská Ostrava, a lieutenant in the Czechoslovak Army.¹⁸³

Russian and Ukrainian émigrés were deported not only from Bohemia but also from Moravia and Slovakia. Many of them had settled there after

graduating from Czechoslovak universities in the 1930s. Among those living in Bratislava were Anatoly Danilevsky, Anatoly Makarov, Evgeny Vakar, Nikolay Lupandin, Oleg Lipsky, Ing. Petr Voznesensky, Sergey Nikolaev and Georgy Biryukovich; in Brno, Ing. Georgy Tesh. Although the majority of Russians and Ukrainians lived in Prague, there were many deportations from other parts of the country.¹⁸⁴

Four Waves of Russian and Ukrainian Émigrés

Vladimír Bystrov uses the term “Russian and Ukrainian emigration” for all émigrés from the former Russian Empire after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917 without regard to ethnicity,¹⁸⁵ since Russians and Ukrainians were the most numerous among them. They arrived in Czechoslovakia in several waves. In addition to the first, “authentic” Russian and Ukrainian emigration, which was the main target for deportation, Vladimír Bystrov has identified three other groups of Russian and Ukrainian origin in Czechoslovakia: the second wave was made up of several dozen Russian intellectuals who were exiled from the USSR in 1922—the “disenfranchised” (*lishentsi*). The third wave came in the mid-1920s and consisted of various “nonreturnees” (*nevozvrashchentsi*) who left the USSR legally, but then decided not to return. The fourth wave was of refugees who left the Baltic states and eastern Poland in 1939 and those who arrived in Czechoslovakia in the years from 1941 to 1944.

The first wave of émigrés consisted mainly of demobilized members of the Volunteer Army who came in 1921–1923 at the invitation of the Czechoslovak government and were enabled to complete their education. These gradually established themselves both financially and socially in Czechoslovakia and started families. According to Bystrov, there were 26,669 stateless foreigners aged over fourteen of which 8,431 were émigrés from Russia in Czechoslovakia in the mid-1930s. Between 1923 and 1938 around 2,000 Russian and 1,000 Ukrainian émigrés, possibly more, obtained Czechoslovak citizenship. By 1945 most Russian and Ukrainian émigrés had obtained Czechoslovak citizenship and only a few dozen still had Nansen passports.¹⁸⁶

Between the wars, Prague was an important center of Russian artistic, cultural and intellectual life. Around a hundred Russian journals or magazines were published in Prague between 1929 and 1949 and about twenty newspapers. Dozens more periodicals were published by the Ukrainian émigrés. A constant flow of books came from émigré Russian and Ukrainian publishers, who had full publishing programs.¹⁸⁷ The arrests of Rus-

sian and Ukrainian émigrés were made largely in the days immediately following the arrival of the Red Army. Those arrested were primarily from the first wave of emigration, in particular the major personalities, the leaders and experts, people known as moral and political authorities. They came mainly from the upper or middle classes and most of them were university educated. According to Bystrov, by 1928 altogether 1,946 Russian émigrés had graduated from Czechoslovak universities of which 300 were medical doctors, 170 doctors of law, ninety-two held doctorates in the humanities, seventy in the natural sciences and twenty-three in veterinary science. Czechoslovakia had also welcomed Russian university teachers and research workers who had emigrated from Russia to other European countries. Up to 1930 there were 130 Russian and Ukrainian professors and lecturers.¹⁸⁸ According to Bystrov, those abducted formed only 2% of all the Russian émigrés living in Czechoslovakia, but almost 7% of those who had Czechoslovak citizenship, i.e., those whose position in the Czech and Slovak environment was more stable and visible. Their standing in society was clearly one of the signs by which the Soviets “chose” those who were to be abducted.

The Deportations of Russian and Ukrainian Anti-Bolshevik Émigrés

The nature of the abductions of Russian and Ukrainian anti-Bolshevik émigrés differed from the treatment of other inhabitants of Czechoslovakia deported after the end of World War II:

1. They were from more clearly defined social and political groups.
2. The reasons given were not connected with alleged collaboration with the enemy or assistance for the enemy during a time of war; members of this group were accused of being staunch antagonists who represented a threat to the Soviet Union because they rejected the Bolshevik regime and settled in places where, by their authority in society, they could disable the implementation of Soviet geopolitical interests.¹⁸⁹

The action against the White Émigrés was primarily in the hands of the much-feared SMERSH. According to Jiří Fiedler of the Institute of Military History in Prague, there is evidence that the Czechoslovak Communist resistance supplied SMERSH with information about citizens of Russian origin which they systematically collected before the arrival of the Red Army and then handed over to the Soviets.¹⁹⁰ Bystrov states that the operation against the White Émigrés was conceived over a long period, which confirms the involvement of the SMERSH counterespionage.

Around 250 White Émigrés were deported of which almost two-thirds perished or disappeared in unknown or little-known circumstances. Among the better-known White Émigrés to be deported were General Sergey Voytsekhovsky, Envoy Vladimir Rafalsky, Envoy Maxim Slavinsky, Directors Vladimir Svetoazarov and Petr Savitsky of the Russian Gymnasium (secondary school), Director Hryhoriy Omelchenko of the Ukrainian Gymnasium, the writer Konstantin Chkheidze, Admiral Yakov Podgorny, factory owner Georgy Tesh, philologist and literary historian Alfred Bem, Director of the Russian Institute for Agricultural Cooperatives Sergey Marakuev, Chairman of the Ukrainian Community in Czechoslovakia Mykola Halahan, architect Yury Prokopenko, Chairman of the Museum of the Liberation Struggle of Ukraine Volodymyr Birchak, General Dmitry Cherkes, Chairman of the Union of Russian Writers and Journalists in Czechoslovakia Sergey Varshavsky, Administrator of the Library of the Russian Foreign History Archive Sergey Postnikov, Director of the Institute of N.P. Kondakov in Prague Nikolay Andreev, Minister of Agriculture in the Provisional Government and Representative of the Prague Center of the Agrarian Party of Work—*Rolnické Rusko* Sergey Maslov, representatives of the same party Vadim Mikhaylov, Ivan Vereshchagin, Alexandr Yuvenitsky, Nikolay Antipov and Alexey Ovsyannikov, publisher and editor Petro Zlenko, priest Petr Dolgorukov, architect Mikhail Kovalevsky, Lieutenant Colonel Anton Shkelenko, former diplomat and owner of a film company Borys Sukhoruchko-Khoslovsky, architect Leonid Lada-Yakushevich, geometrist Fedor Skripnik, Archimandrite Ivan Vinogradov, RNDr. Ing. Andrey Matusevich of the Technical University in Brno, Ing. Alexandr Tserazov.

Russian and Ukrainian officers of the Czechoslovak Army were also held and deported (Staff Captain Petrov, Lieutenant Colonel Konstantin Kapnin), as well as doctors, factory owners, members of the Czechoslovak civil service (Volodymyr Pasichnyk, Nikolay Bystrov, Mykhaylo Kocherhan), teachers, designers and architects, construction and engineering specialists, clergy and dozens more Russians and Ukrainians holding respected positions in Czechoslovak social, intellectual, cultural and economic life.¹⁹¹

Persons of Russian and Ukrainian origin whose paperwork is still in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs include Yaroslav Kulikov, b. 1902 in Kharkov, living in Czechoslovakia from 1921¹⁹²; Alexandr Antipov, b. 1895 in St. Petersburg, who like many others married a Czech woman in Prague;¹⁹³ JUDr. Viktor Bely, b. 1894;¹⁹⁴ Alexandr Fridman, b. 1876 in Bogodukhov (Ukrainian: Bohodukhiv) in the Poltava region of

the Ukraine¹⁹⁵; Vladimir Kalachevsky, a teacher in the Russian Gymnasium in Prague¹⁹⁶; Ing. Yevgeny Vakar, b. 1879 in Omsk, a Czechoslovak citizen¹⁹⁷; Anatoly Makarov and Georgy Biryukovich¹⁹⁸; Ing. Zachary Isaenko-Gorazhiy, b. 1886 in the Kharkov region¹⁹⁹; and Vladimir Khylet-sky.²⁰⁰ Czechoslovak citizenship was not of any help to the Russians and Ukrainians; however, those who were stateless, such as RNDr. Yury Gorokholinsky, born in Vladivostok in 1909, were in an even worse position.²⁰¹ Included among the stateless were Jiří Harmata (Harmaty), who, although he is described as a Czechoslovak citizen in some documents, was of Ukrainian ethnicity (born in Ukraine in Holkajovich [most probably this location is called in Ukrainian: Kolbaevychi, in Polish: Kołbajowice, in Russian: Kolbaevichi], district of Rutki [Ukrainian: Rutky] in 1888). He gave his address as Ruprechtice, near Liberec in North Bohemia, and that was where he was deported from.²⁰² Ivan Vomáčka (Vomachka), b. 1920 in Novorossiysk, was arrested on 12 May 1945 and deported, as was Nikolay (or Mykola, if Ukrainian) Chanas (Khanas), b. 1898 in Kornycze on Polish territory²⁰³ (currently in Ukraine, Ukrainian: Kornychi).

According to Bystrov, the families of Russian and Ukrainian émigrés were well aware why the Soviet security services took away their fathers and husbands, for the Soviet authorities had made it clear that they were interested in the political, or at least the public, activities of those persons during their emigration. The families who suffered such losses felt the firm ground of the Czechoslovakia of Masaryk and Beneš disappear from under their feet. The arrests were for them an overthrow of the previous democratic consensus; the general perception was that in 1945 the country should again be Beneš's Czechoslovakia. The blow fell especially harshly in émigré families with Czechoslovak citizenship.²⁰⁴

Many of the deported were apprehended in their own apartments, but in other cases various excuses were used. In the case of civilians deported from Slovakia, the most frequent summons was to help repair a bridge. In the case of many Russians and Ukrainians, the deportation followed their more or less willing response to an appeal to help with interpretation. The fate of Ing. Vladimir Klonov, born in Russia in 1890 and now a Czechoslovak citizen, was along those lines; he was invited to "come for a chat with a Russian officer" and never returned.²⁰⁵

Unlike the majority of civilian deportees from Slovakia, the Russian and Ukrainian émigrés were subjected to a court procedure. Most of them faced what was called an extraordinary hearing of the People's Commissariat of the Interior, while some were sentenced by military tribunals. As

a rule, they were tried on the basis of Article 58, which appeared in a special part of the Penal Code of the RSFSR of 1926 under heading I: "Criminal Acts against the State. I. Counterrevolutionary Criminal Acts," especially paragraphs 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13. In the case of some of those charged, reference was made to their membership of military groupings during the Russian Civil War of 1918–1920. Most of them were then charged with membership of specifically named émigré societies and organizations. The majority of sentences were ten years, exceptionally eight or five years.

Soviet justice itself did not hide that this "caused particularly venomous attacks on Soviet justice from bourgeois lawyers who saw in them the overturning of law and justice, because in their opinion actions cannot be punished retroactively."²⁰⁶

Steps Taken by the Czechoslovak Government and the Reaction of the USSR

We should look now at how the Czechoslovak government reacted to these deportations and how the Soviet Union explained them. It would appear that once the Soviet Union had arrested and deported its victims (almost certainly identified in advance by SMERSH), subsequently it did not hesitate to make official statements and give assurances that émigrés who had come to Czechoslovakia before 1 January 1939 would not be forced to return to the Soviet Union. These declarations were connected with the establishment of principles for the repatriation of Soviet citizens to the USSR. Starting in autumn 1945, the Soviet organs had been trying to secure and repatriate to the Soviet Union former Soviet citizens who found themselves in Czechoslovakia.

One of the first Czechoslovak documents to mention the deportation of Russian and Ukrainian émigrés is the "Overview of Czechoslovak Citizens Held by the Organs of the NKVD on the Territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, Some of Whom Are of Russian, Some of Ukrainian Ethnicity" of 6 August 1945, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for State Secretary Vladimír Clementis. The authors of this document thought that Clementis ought to discuss this with Soviet ambassador Zorin.²⁰⁷

As has already been mentioned, in October 1945 the Deputy Prime Minister Monsignor Jan Šrámek tried by means of the Ministry of National Defense to intervene for 57 persons, most of them Russians and Ukrainians. Monsignor Avgustyn Voloshyn, a Greek Catholic priest and Ukrainian politician was included on the list. Voloshyn, who was for one

day president of Carpatho-Ukraine (15/16 March 1939) and lived in Prague during the war, was arrested by the NKVD in May 1945 and died shortly afterwards. Even though General Bohumil Boček intervened with Marshal Georgy Zhukov for their release and argued that as Czechoslovak citizens they were subject to Czechoslovak jurisprudence, his efforts were unsuccessful.²⁰⁸

On 9 November 1945 the Ministry of the Interior,²⁰⁹ in agreement with the 5th Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs represented by Ing. Odon Pára, informed the national committees at all levels, regional police offices and all the offices of national security, that persons with Soviet state citizenship who traveled from the USSR with valid Soviet passports before the outbreak of war with the USSR, and persons who from the beginning to the end of the war were citizens of the USSR and on the present Czechoslovak territory were expelled, abducted or fled from the German Army, were deemed by the Soviet offices to be Soviet citizens falling under the repatriation of Soviet offices. Persons of Czech or Slovak ethnicity and women of mixed marriages did not have to be included in the repatriation. All Soviet citizens had to be registered by 25 November, even those in prison, and no new permits for residence in the Czechoslovak Republic were to be given to Soviet citizens subject to repatriation.

A report on the “repatriation of Russian citizens” which explains and comments on this ruling was prepared for Vladimír Clementis on 29 November 1945. It refers to a suggestion from Lieutenant Colonel of the Red Army Deev to Minister of the Interior Nosek in which the principles for repatriation of Soviet state citizens to the Soviet Union were established. It includes a statement: “Lt. Col. Deev expressly observed that provision of repatriation *did not relate* [underlined in the original] to those called Russian émigrés who came to the territory of the Republic of Czechoslovakia before 1 January 1939.” Nor were persons of Czech and Slovak ethnicity, women in mixed marriages and Volhynian Czechs to be included in the lists of persons for repatriation.²¹⁰

We frequently find similar expressions in documents of this time. For example, on 28 May 1946 the Plenipotentiary Repatriation in Czechoslovakia Lt. Col. Deev presented Minister of the Interior Nosek with a request to be allowed to order all national committees and the police force to check all Soviet citizens within their jurisdiction and transport those persons who “do not have the right to live in Czechoslovakia” to a collection camp on the Letná Plain in Prague. It states that “not subject to repatriation are those persons of Russian, Ukrainian or other nationalities of the USSR who emigrated at some time in the past (i.e., before 1939–

1940).” On 3 June 1946 the Ministry of the Interior gave a directive along these lines to all relevant institutions and sections, adding that it is in the interest of the Czechoslovak Republic that Soviet state citizens without the right to live in the Czechoslovak Republic be transported to their home country as soon as possible.²¹¹

On reading the instructions, it would seem that it was only a question of ensuring that when the war was over no Soviet citizens remained in Czechoslovakia without proper documentation or permission. It was even specifically stated that women who had married Czechoslovak citizens, and had confirmation from the Soviet authorities, were not subject to repatriation, likewise people who had obtained valid passports and émigrés who had arrived before 1939. However, we know that it was different in practice, and that, for example, Russian women who had been abducted during the war for forced labor in Germany and had then married Czechs after the war, for which they had received permission from the Soviet authorities, were still forcibly returned to the Soviet Union. In a number of cases families were broken up, even in situations where the woman was pregnant, or where there were children from her marriage to a Czech man.

In 1946 the Soviet authorities constantly forced the Czechoslovak side to intervene in cases where there were Soviet citizens “hiding” from repatriation because they had not been declared by their employer or were in prison for some trivial offence.

Soviet Women with Czechoslovak Husbands

On 21 May 1946 the Interior Ministry sent a detailed and specific report about Soviet citizens in Czechoslovakia to the Foreign Ministry. It informed the Foreign Ministry that in Moravian Silesia there were sixteen members of the Red Army and 150 civilians including children who were Soviet citizens. The Red Army soldiers were mostly in hospital; the other men and some of the women had been taken to the collection camp on Letná Plain in Prague while the other women had permission to stay and get married. Other documents detail the persons who were in Moravian Silesia without permission, explain that their situation is due to the Soviet embassy not giving the permission requested for marriages, and weigh up how to solve this situation. This material seems on the whole sensible and did not assume a threatening attitude toward people in whose fates the war and unsettled conditions of wartime had interfered. It is interesting for us that the material refers to people:

remaining on our territory without permission who before the war were resident in what is today part of the USSR and who fled here or were abducted by the German Army. They do not fall into the category of repatriation, nor can they opt for Czechoslovak state citizenship, because they are of neither Czech nor Slovak ethnicity, and have not served in the Czechoslovak military abroad.²¹²

We know from specifically documented cases that these persons were deported to the Soviet Union.

According to the official Soviet standpoint, as presented by Lt. Col. Deev and as was communicated through the Interior and Justice Ministries to all the competent Czechoslovak organs, the following were not subject to repatriation:

1. Women married to Czechoslovak citizens, having the confirmation of the Soviet embassy and appropriate marriage certificates
2. Persons having passports provided with a visa given after the war
3. Persons with Russian, Ukrainian or any other ethnicity who had emigrated before 1939

In all other cases of Soviet citizens the Soviet authorities insisted on their repatriation.

We know that the Soviet authorities had prior interest in Russian and Ukrainian émigrés from the former Russian Empire, and that after the Liberation they should immediately be arrested and deported to the Soviet Union. It would seem that this could be in conflict with Point 3 above. However, at the time the principles were being published, the leading figures of the White Emigration had already been deported. Soviet power, having satisfied its own interests, no longer had a problem in formulating the principle that émigrés who came to Czechoslovakia before 1939 would not be forced to return to the Soviet Union.

Forced Repatriation to the USSR

Soviet power was uncompromising toward persons with Soviet citizenship who tried to stay in Czechoslovakia. Archive documents show a great deal from the backstage of Soviet repatriation policies. We remember how Golubev reproved the Czechoslovak diplomats when he officially announced the end of repatriation. He criticized the Czechoslovak authorities for not cooperating sufficiently with the Soviets in the search for Soviet citizens and claimed that Czechoslovak citizens, misguided by their Slavic sympathies, were not active enough in denouncing them. Golubev

was actually requiring the Czechoslovak authorities to force people to inform on their neighbors, and an accusation of failure to cooperate with the Soviets was a dangerous matter in the years of the personality cult and a resurgence of Stalin's purges. An enormous quantity of documents confirms that the Soviet Union was far from respecting the category of inhabitants named by the Soviet side as those who would not be repatriated, as, for example, women who married Czechoslovak citizens with the permission of the Soviet authorities. We know that the Soviet authorities not only deliberately prolonged or prevented the issue of a marriage permit; they forced even pregnant married women to be repatriated to the USSR, causing the breakup of families. They also undermined negotiations about the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens from the USSR by demanding that Soviet citizens living in Czechoslovakia be handed over for forced repatriation. In spite of all this pressure, it was little joy to the Soviet authorities that several years after the war a number of Soviet citizens still remained in Czechoslovakia (this does not mean persons who were in Czechoslovakia for purposes connected to work, for at that time no one traveled from the Soviet Union to Czechoslovakia for any other purpose).

The following memorandum from the Interior Ministry, dated 1946, may help to throw light on the situation:

As is clear from previous announcements, numerous misunderstandings have been responsible for the fact that the Soviet repatriation offices requested the repatriation of persons who in fact were not subject to repatriation (there were such persons in the lists sent up to now, caused to a large measure by different judicial codes in the USSR and in the Czechoslovak Republic). What it concerns is the fact that on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic it is the Czechoslovak judicial code that is valid, and not a foreign one. Soviet citizens who have lawfully married a Czechoslovak citizen—even without the agreement of the Soviet authorities—cannot be repatriated. Even in the case of criminal acts committed against the USSR they can only be prosecuted solely by Czechoslovak courts, so not even these people can be handed over to Soviet offices for punishment. . . . The fact that the Soviet authorities might consider citizens who have celebrated a legal wedding in Czechoslovakia without their agreement as being single is irrelevant from the point of view of the Czechoslovak judicial code. It also has to be said that it is not possible for repatriation to proceed in cases where it would mean rupturing the marital bond, since the principle of the indivisibility of the marital bond was recognized even in the case of the deportation of the Germans. That such an attempt was made was ascertained from the document in question . . . and it was the subject of a complaint to the Office of the President of the Republic. In addition, it is also noted that the Czechoslovak Republic, as a member state of the United Nations, pledged that it will not repatriate displaced persons to their home states against their will unless they are war criminals, quislings or traitors.²¹³

Even though the Czechoslovak authorities were committed to a principled standpoint and gave cogent reasons, cases still occurred in contradiction to those principles. This can be seen in a memorandum from the interior minister to the head of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Repatriation in the Czechoslovak Republic:

Soviet citizens who have legally married a Czechoslovak citizen in the Czechoslovak Republic cannot be repatriated even if the marriage took place without the agreement of the Soviet authorities. They cannot be handed over even if they have committed criminal acts in the USSR since they are protected by a legal prohibition and can be prosecuted for these criminal acts by the Czechoslovak courts only. . . .

Likewise a Czechoslovak office cannot be involved in a repatriation which, if it were carried out, would have as its result the rupturing of a legally performed marital bond, in the course of which the validity of the marriage is to be judged from the Czechoslovak standpoint and not according to the Soviet judicial code.²¹⁴

The Three Lists of Local National Committees and Examples of Three Forced Repatriations

In 1949 the Interior Ministry sent a circular on repatriation and the records of Soviet citizens living in the Czechoslovak Republic to national committees at every level.²¹⁵ The circular stated that Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Georgian and other nationals who came to Czechoslovakia after 21 June 1941 had to register with the Soviet embassy and of these the majority were subject to repatriation. However, many did not register and went into hiding. The circular ordered the national committees at higher levels to summon all such citizens to declare themselves unconditionally within three days. National committees had to make three lists. In one they had to list citizens from Transcarpathian Ukraine who had moved after the borders had been closed (22 September 1945) and citizens from other territories of the USSR who left the USSR after Hitler's invasion (21 June 1941) or after the end of World War II. These persons, whether of age or underage, had to be taken immediately to the repatriation camp on Letná Plain. This list had to include the children of Soviet citizens who had lost their parents and were in the care of private persons or in institutions.

The second list was of people who still had "temporary and until now valid confirmation from the Consular Department of the Soviet embassy in Prague or the Consul General in Bratislava." Even people who had been in possession of valid confirmation had to visit the Soviet embassy in order to prolong it, and that within a month at the most. It was stated that

these persons were not subject to repatriation for the period of validity of the consular confirmation, but the required compulsory submission for prolongation was abused in that either confirmation was not prolonged, or the validity was canceled. In this way the persons concerned lost the opportunity to live legally in Czechoslovakia and were handed over for immediate repatriation to the Soviet Union.

The third list recorded those women from the first list—that is, those who came from Transcarpathian Ukraine after 22 September 1945 and women from other territories of the USSR who came during World War II and after its end—who were living with a Czechoslovak citizen and had children by him, or who had married a Czechoslovak citizen after 24 June 1947²¹⁶ and had children by him. These women were not subject to repatriation, as long as they immediately put a request to the Soviet embassy for the right to stay. A similar scenario followed, in which the embassy confiscated the women's documents and forced them back to the USSR.

As in the case of similar documents, the circular confirms that former Soviet citizens who had acquired definitive Czechoslovak citizenship were not subject to repatriation. The circular ends as follows:

Based on previous experience it can be anticipated that some Soviet citizens will not declare themselves again. The district (central) national committees with all subordinate elements must accordingly ensure that these persons are identified and the action successfully completed without delay. Soviet citizens of all the above categories have to be searched for even after 20 May 1949; if such persons are identified, they have to be declared immediately.

An appeal was attached to the circular according to which all the above named Soviet citizens had to declare themselves at the district national committee to be registered at the latest by 30 April 1949.

Vasil Čapla

On 15 May 1945 Vasil Čapla (Ukrainian: Vasyl Chapla; but he always used the Czech form of his name), professor at a business academy in Resslova Street, Prague 2, was taken from his apartment by Soviet officers who gave no reason, nor did they say where they were taking him. His wife Eliška Čaplová received two messages from him, the second on 20 October 1948 from Kharkov (Ukrainian: Kharkiv).

Vasil Čapla was born on 20 June 1891 in Jasienica Solna in the district of Drohobycz on Galician territory, at that time part of Austro-Hungary. He had never been a Soviet citizen. From 1918 he had studied in Prague; he

had Czechoslovak citizenship, his wife was Czech, and his children were registered as being of Czech ethnicity. On 10 March 1949 Eliška Čaplová turned to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimír Clementis with a request for the return of her husband. It is worth quoting the ministry's analysis of this case, signed by Marta Gottwaldová-Čepičková. (Gottwaldová-Čepičková was the daughter of Klement Gottwald, the president of Czechoslovakia and the highest functionary of the Communist Party in the state, and the wife of Alexej Čepička, an important Communist functionary and member of the government. She was head of the section for people's democratic states [i.e., countries of the Soviet bloc with the exception of the USSR] of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.) It reads in full:

Ing. Vasil Čapla is on a group list of former Russian and Ukrainian émigrés interned in the USSR in 1945. The list was sent to Moscow on the basis of a conversation between Minister Dr. Clementis and Ambassador Zorin. At that time (3 January 1948) the list consisted of nineteen persons for whom the Interior Ministry had agreed repatriation and fifty-six persons who should still be checked by the ministry. While agreeing to many of them, the Interior Ministry refused repatriation to Ing. Vasil Čapla, no. BR-8901/48-P of 8 June 1948. In refutation of this, Mrs. Čaplová notified the Foreign Ministry personally that the Ministry of the Interior had informed her that the repatriation of Ing. Čapla was allowed according to no. B/R-12261/48 of 22 January 1948.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore sent Enquiry File no. 210.289/V-3A/48 of 25 October 1948 to the Interior Ministry, to ask which of its decisions was valid. The Interior Ministry was again reminded of the solution on 13 January 1949 and Mrs. Čaplová was advised during a personal visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 7 April 1949 to urge a solution at the Ministry of the Interior.

JUDr. Pátková, deputy of the National Assembly, was informed about the state of the matter in an earlier letter of 12 January 1949. She intervened in writing at the Foreign Ministry.

Even if the Interior Ministry decides in his favor, there can be no expectation that Ing. Čapla will return soon, for according to a telegram of 5 October 1948 from the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow, former Russian and Ukrainian émigrés interned in 1945 in the Czechoslovak Republic committed serious offences and the Soviet authorities consider intervention for their early release unfounded and further interventions for them politically inappropriate. The embassy in Moscow wrote further on 23 December 1948, that *intervention on behalf of the former Russian émigrés held in the USSR for hostile acts against the USSR, are completely undesirable, even though from the formal point of view they are our citizens*. The Ministry of the Interior will again be reminded of the case of Ing. Čapla, and Mrs. Čaplová is being informed that the Interior Ministry has still not communicated which of its decisions about repatriation the Foreign Ministry should consider valid, and that from the side of the Soviet authorities nothing is decided in this matter. (Emphasis in the original)

In the end the Foreign Ministry recommended Mrs. Čaplová to go herself to the Interior Ministry and remind them of the solution of this case.

On 29 June 1949 the Interior Ministry decided in Vasil Čapla's favor and notified the Foreign Ministry that it agreed with his repatriation. The embassy in Moscow was to be informed of this decision and had to intervene appropriately on behalf of Vasil Čapla. However, there is a handwritten note on the document of the Ministry of the Interior intended for the Foreign Ministry, Department B-1. We can understand from this note that in the light of a telephone conversation with the above-mentioned official Dr. Hora from the Interior Ministry who signed the positive solution, the document was again returned to the official and the Interior Ministry urged the solution of this document. There is only one way of explaining this instruction. The positive solution signed by Dr. Hora was annulled by telephone and the preparation of a negative decision was urged. The reason: "The person named was born in Galicia, i.e., in the former Austro-Hungary, and should therefore be on the list of Russian émigrés." The Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow was also to be informed.²¹⁷

Ing. Čapla had been a citizen of Austro-Hungary and then became a citizen of Czechoslovakia. In the interwar period the territory of Galicia was a part of Poland and only became part of the Soviet Union when the Polish-Soviet frontier was shifted westwards after World War II. Ing. Čapla, however, was not living in this territory at the time it was part of the Soviet Union; he had already been a Czechoslovak citizen for many years. As Mrs. Čaplová wrote in her letter, their family had always regarded the USSR positively and had sheltered Soviet prisoners of war who had escaped from the German concentration camps. I fear that this positive attitude to the USSR did not survive the tragedy of her husband's imprisonment.

The Case of Roman Woloszczuk

Roman Woloszczuk (Polonized Ukrainian name: Voloshchuk) was born in Lvov, about 1894. He was thus a citizen of Austro-Hungary who, at the beginning of the 1920s, emigrated from Galicia to Czechoslovakia. He was far more at home in Masaryk's Czechoslovakia than under the Bolshevik regime which cast its shadow when the Red Army advanced westwards as far as Poland. He took his doctorate at the Law Faculty in Prague, obtained Czechoslovak citizenship and started a family. His wife was Slovak, so they moved to Bratislava, where Roman Woloszczuk became the heart and soul of the Ukrainian community. His niece recalls that he held life and society in Czechoslovakia in high esteem and sometimes used to say that if the Russians were to come, that would be the end of it.

His presentiment was fulfilled. During the wartime Slovak Republic, Roman Woloszczuk was head of the 3rd Department of the Ministry of Finance, so there were two reasons for him to be targeted by the Red Army. First, he was a Ukrainian émigré—although he had come to Czechoslovakia before 1 January 1939 and therefore belonged to a group which should not have been forced to repatriate. The second reason was that he was working for the Slovak state. Roman Woloszczuk was ruthlessly interrogated by the Soviet organs; according to his niece, methods such as mock executions were used. Amazingly, however, he was not imprisoned or interned, which gave him an opportunity to purchase a plot in the cemetery. Then he wrote a farewell note and killed himself. That was in summer 1945. Strictly speaking, the tragic fate of Roman Woloszczuk does not belong to the theme of this study. He was never deported and was even, in spite of all the interrogations, left at liberty. Maybe Woloszczuk's release was intentional. In his position at the Ministry of Finance he probably came into contact with the gold confiscated from Slovak Jews. Some people think that at the end of the war he tried to find a hiding place for this gold in the Franciscan church in Skalica. However, Woloszczuk's niece is convinced—and cites as evidence his farewell letter, family tradition, and especially what her mother told her—that what drove her uncle to suicide was nothing to do with his post at the Slovak Ministry of Finance, but the "Soviet threat."²¹⁸

An Adopted Orphaned Child

Václav Vaško (who at that time was working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) remembered how tragically the situation could sometimes turn out:

The case that distressed me the most took place at the end of 1950. There was a nine-year-old girl from, I think, Lithuania: at the beginning of 1944, when the Russian front was advancing on the Baltics, the Germans abducted hundreds of women and children and took them to Germany. Among them was a grandmother with her orphaned granddaughter. The grandmother died on the journey. On the station of a small Moravian town the women being deported managed to entrust the two- or three-year-old girl to some unknown people: "Save this one at least," they begged. With the help of the local priest the child was adopted and spent six years in the love and care of a Christian woman. Soviet snoopers somehow tracked the child down and insisted on her being repatriated to the Soviet Union. The mother and daughter, who had arrived that afternoon at the repatriation camp on Letná Plain, were now sitting in front of me. When the mother was telling me the story of her daughter she fell on her knees and, in tears and with hands clasped, begged me for help. Then the little girl burst into tears, threw

her arms round her mother's neck and cried "Mummy, don't give me up!" I tried to calm them down, but how? Very upset, I went and got hold of Schmelz and asked him whether there couldn't be some exception. He told me that I knew very well that the Soviets would consider it to be interference in their internal matters, and he forbade me to concern myself with the case.²¹⁹

This was just one human tragedy; with variations, it was repeated many times in the course of repatriation. The only exceptions from immediate forced repatriation were those being treated in hospital and those in prison.

1949: A Ban on Marriages and on Obtaining Czechoslovak Citizenship

Not even this circular, nor a similar one on 20 May 1949, led to a satisfactory result in the eyes of the Soviet authorities. The Czechoslovak Interior Ministry therefore, evidently on Soviet instructions, issued another circular on the matter of repatriation and recording of Soviet citizens living on Czechoslovak territory on 15 September.²²⁰ This circular throws light on the Soviet approach to citizens of the USSR who tried to find a legal way of living in Czechoslovakia. The circular draws attention to the ban on awarding Czechoslovak citizenship to Soviet citizens, both as naturalization and according to the Law no. 74/1946 Coll. (Czechoslovak); it further announces a general ban on marriages of Soviet citizens and insofar as individual marriages are allowed and concluded after 24 June 1946, a Soviet woman is not allowed to receive Czechoslovak citizenship. Further, abandoned Soviet children are not allowed to be put into private care and had to be repatriated to the Soviet Union. The document also orders that: "Any requests from Soviet citizens for permission to get married are to be rejected on the spot. No questions or requests for an exception are to be entertained." Another paragraph sets down:

Also counted as Soviet state citizens are former Polish state citizens from former Polish territory which was in September 1939 transferred to the USSR, who from September 1939 to 22 June 1941 lived on this territory (the regions of Volhynia, Lvov [Ukrainian: Lviv], Stanislav [currently Russian: Ivano-Frankovsk; Ukrainian: Ivano-Frankivsk], Baranovichi [Belarusian: Baranavičy;], etc.), as are former state citizens of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania who from July 1940 to 22 June 1941 lived on the territory of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics. These persons are Soviet state citizens even at the time when, during World War II, they were abducted from there and did not return.

At the same time, persons who requested Czechoslovak citizenship had to fill in a questionnaire with seventeen points ascertaining, among other things, precisely which family members lived in Czechoslovakia and which in the USSR. We know that this information, together with the family ties which had been “tracked down” in the Russian Foreign Archive and handed over to the USSR (thanks primarily to the hard-line Communist Minister of Culture Zdeněk Nejedlý) were an important source of information for the NKVD and KGB.

Did the Czechoslovak Government Intervene?

Lists of the Russians and Ukrainians who were deported still exist; some of them are undated but were apparently made soon after the deportations. They document that a majority of these deported persons were from Prague, but not all of them, because information appears from the rest of Bohemia as well as Bratislava and Brno.²²¹ The number of deported persons of Russian ethnicity is given at something under one hundred—ninety-three or ninety-five. However, for the year 1945 we have very few sources on deported persons of Russian or Ukrainian origin. More documents begin to appear in 1946. The summary report of 10 May 1946 for Secretary of State Clementis states:

In May, June and July of last year the organs of the Red Army and the NKVD arrested maybe a hundred Czechoslovak citizens of Russian ethnicity in Prague and deported them from the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, and maybe around the same number of persons of Russian ethnicity without Czechoslovak citizenship, but living in Czechoslovakia for more than twenty years. All the Czechoslovak citizens were registered on lists sent to Moscow on the basis of which the embassy of the Czechoslovak Republic in Moscow then intervened at the appropriate quarters. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not intervene without special reasons for those who did not have Czechoslovak citizenship.

The Soviet offices clearly take up a different standpoint toward them than to other Czechoslovak citizens which already derives from the fact that while the Czechoslovaks are released en masse, of a group of former émigrés, up to now none of them, apart from two or three cases, have returned from the Soviet Union. We will have to decide: 1. Whether any special intervention has to be carried out in their cases; 2. Whether this intervention also concerns those who are not Czechoslovak citizens, but who have nevertheless lived here for more than twenty years, most of whom have married Czech women, and whose children have been brought up as Czechs.²²²

The writer of the report saw that the Soviet Union's attitude toward these deportees was different from that toward other deported Czechoslo-

vak citizens, even though he did not altogether understand why this should be. He noticed that hardly anyone from this small group of deported persons had yet returned. Theoretically, that could have been by coincidence. However, we know that it was not coincidence but intention on the Soviet side. Deported civilians of Czechoslovak ethnicity were held in camps as long as they could work, and then the Soviet Union sent them back to their homeland (if they had not died first) when they were no longer useful. The deported leaders of the White Emigration were not put in camps to work; they were put in camps to isolate them from a society they could influence.²²³ In the end Clementis issued instructions to the recapitulation above: “that special intervention in the matters mentioned above be delayed until the issue of Slovaks and Czechs interned in the USSR is solved.”

In spite of this tentative and careful attitude up to January 1948, we do come across sporadic interventions for Russians and Ukrainians, and a statement by the Ministry of the Interior has survived in which the ministry agrees with their repatriation.²²⁴

However, cases appeared when the names of the deported were deleted from intervention lists and interventions for these people stopped. These were cases when the Local National Committee said that the person concerned had cooperated with the German occupants or that he had “anti-Soviet and Fascist opinions.” The Slovak Commissariat of the Interior, for example, denounced Nikolay Kryukovsky (b. 1893 in Russia) in such a way, and even when the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry came up with a testimonial that he had always had a good reputation, the denunciation from the Commissariat of the Interior was enough to thwart the possibility of intervening for Kryukovsky.²²⁵ It was sufficient to indicate that someone was a “Ukrainian nationalist” for them to be deleted from the list of interventions. That was the fate of JUDr. Alexander Gaymanivsky (Ukrainian version of his name: Oleksandr Haymanivsky) (b. 1866 in the Kiev *guberniya*) who was a librarian in the Ukrainian Department of the Slavonic Library in Prague. He was pointed out as a “Ukrainian nationalist” and once he was labeled, the interior minister no longer recommended the Foreign Ministry to intervene for him.²²⁶

However, refusals rarely occurred in the early period, and the Czechoslovak offices decided in the majority of cases to go forward with intervention. For example, the wives of seventy-three deported men turned collectively to the Foreign Ministry—it is not surprising they united, for they must have known each other already and knew that other families had suffered the same fate. Their husbands were Czechoslovak citizens or

had lived in Czechoslovakia for more than twenty-five years with the right to asylum, and all were abducted in May and June 1945. A document of 27 July 1946 makes it plain that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did intervene for those with Czechoslovak citizenship.²²⁷

Interventions Considered Politically Inappropriate and Releases Unjustified

On 3 January 1948 the Foreign Ministry informed the embassy in Moscow that Vladimír Clementis had talked to Ambassador Zorin on 26 December 1947 and that they would receive a list of Czechoslovak citizens of Russian ethnicity arrested by the Soviet military between May and August 1945 and deported to the USSR where they were still interned. The memorandum indicates that nineteen on the list were already allowed to return, and gave their names and date of birth and the names of the camps where they were held. The embassy was instructed to intervene for the persons named, while the other 56 were apparently awaiting verification from the Ministry of the Interior.²²⁸

Up to this point the process resembled interventions for civilians deported from Slovakia. However, the Soviets' reply to the Czechoslovak intervention plainly showed that no deportees of Russian or Ukrainian ethnicity would be released, even if their return had been approved by the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior. The Soviet Union stated repeatedly that some of the internees had been sentenced to various (generally long) periods of imprisonment for hostile activities against the USSR, and that they had no news about the others.²²⁹ The embassy promised the Foreign Ministry that: "We will undertake a new intervention as soon as possible on behalf of the other persons of Russian ethnicity whose repatriation has been agreed as mentioned in your [Telegram] no. 1802."

On 30 September 1948 the Foreign Ministry contacted the Moscow embassy with the information that the wives of Czechoslovak citizens, former Russian and Ukrainian émigrés, were bombarding the ministry with questions about "when and whether their husbands would return." The ministry wanted to know whether the embassy had undertaken the intervention referred to the telegram of 31 May 1948 and asked about the result. It is interesting to read that: "The Foreign Ministry believes that the presence of all the abducted must be known to the Soviet authorities, since it was on their instigation that they were all taken to the USSR."²³⁰

The Soviet standpoint was inexorable. On 5 October Counselor Štefan informed the Foreign Ministry:

During the last intervention on behalf of Czechoslovak citizens of Russian ethnicity I was informed that persons of Russian ethnicity who were arrested after the war on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic had committed serious offences against the USSR, and therefore the appropriate Soviet authorities do not consider their premature release to be justified.

I was advised unofficially that this reply can be considered definitive. I therefore consider further interventions on their behalf to be politically inappropriate, and I propose they should not be continued.²³¹

The uncertainty which prevailed at the Foreign Ministry is illuminated by a note on a memo of 8 October 1948. Department V/3/A requested clarification from the Political Department for the Soviet Union (II/1) concerning the return of persons of Russian or Ukrainian ethnicity, because the Political Department had initiated a request for their return. It seems that on the basis of this initiative negotiations took place between Foreign Minister Clementis and Ambassador Zorin, who was returning from Prague to Moscow. Apparently Zorin had discussed this matter in Moscow and now showed interest in a speedy solution to the matter. However, according to a note on the memo, its author knew very well that Zorin's words about finding a speedy solution to the matter meant nothing. Dr. Bartoň, long experienced in the repatriation issue, wrote: "[I]n the opinion of V/3/A it awakes an unfounded hope in the families of many of the persons mentioned that they might be able to count on the return of their husbands."

Bartoň closes by saying that a final decision has to be reached and that department V/3/A has for some time been processing individual requests for repatriation and was not asking the Moscow embassy to deal with them. Department II/1 added to Bartoň's notes that the matter should be presented to the foreign minister for a decision.²³²

The whole matter was briskly closed with a coded message from Ambassador Laštovička on 23 December 1948: "Intervention on behalf of Russian émigrés detained in the USSR for activities hostile to the USSR is completely inappropriate, even though from the formal point of view they may count as our citizens."²³³

Interventions against the Activities of Russian and Ukrainian Institutions in Prague

Vladimír Bystrov records that the deportation of leading personalities among the Russian and Ukrainian émigrés was immediately followed by a series of Czechoslovak decisions limiting the activities of several tradi-

tional institutions for Russians and Ukrainians. The Russian Gymnasium closed down; on 13 June 1945 it was decided that the Russian Foreign History Archive (Ruský zahraniční historický archiv) should be taken over by the USSR; the Russian Orthodox Church was evicted from St. Nicholas's Church in Prague's Old Town, and so on.²³⁴ Bystrov also documents that a negative attitude toward Russian and Ukrainian émigrés was apparent long before the Communist takeover in February 1948, implemented mainly by Communists in key positions in the strategic Ministries of National Defense, the Interior and Foreign Affairs. The following is typical:

Nothing wrong was ascertained about the person mentioned on the part of the Czechoslovak authorities, which does not necessarily rule out that he may have collaborated with the Germans. During the occupation the Russian émigrés were organized into what were called the *Vertrauenstelle*, *UNO*, and so on, and interpreters for the Eastern front, police officials, who interrogated prisoners, agents, etc., were selected from these organizations... [I]ntervention is not considered appropriate.²³⁵

The Russian legal and social office in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in Prague (Russische Vertrauensstelle, otherwise known as the Russian Center) set up at the end of 1939 was intended to "identify and attend to all Russian émigrés living in the former Protectorate" and "ensure their faultless surveillance." Bystrov does not rule out the possibility that the Soviet regime may itself have initiated the Center, as an unknown nonreturnee from Berlin had been appointed as its head. At the end of the war he handed over the card index to SMERSH and disappeared into the American zone.²³⁶

A number of confirmations of the political and national reliability of the abducted Russian and Ukrainian émigrés during the German occupation and applications of their colleagues and fellow citizens for intervention on their behalf have survived. These confirmations were important for the Czechoslovak authorities when intervening for the person in question but had no influence on the Soviets. Bystrov writes that public protest or reaction in the Czechoslovak media went unnoticed, and that news about the abduction of Russian émigrés appeared in some German and American newspapers only exceptionally. In 1946 the Committee of the Ukrainian American Congress turned to President Beneš with an appeal to stop the forced repatriation from Czechoslovakia to the USSR. However, this appeal signed by Štěpán Sumejek argued very high numbers—it claimed that 30,000 Ukrainian and 10,000 Jewish war refugees who were forcibly repatriated from Czechoslovakia to the USSR should have been

returned, and it evoked the declaration of the UN of February 1946 in the matter of the forcible repatriation of bona fide refugees. This information understandably led to the document being sent first to the Ministry of the Interior to check the numbers. The most likely explanation is that it concerned the population of Transcarpathian Ukraine, which territory had been handed over to the Soviet Union and that it was not a matter of repatriation but of a change of citizenship as a result of the change of borders. However, the document quoted shows that the Soviet repatriation policy was followed with apprehension.²³⁷

Vladimir Bystrov considers that the Russian émigrés who, during the First Republic, were politically welcomed and received openly, were now only a hindrance and obstruction for Czechoslovakia.²³⁸ I think this formulation is not quite right. The Czechoslovak government used the same approach in intervening for deported Russian and Ukrainian White Émigrés as they did for deported civilians from Slovakia, and it does not seem they viewed them as they did Germans and Hungarians, in whom it was officially stated that Czechoslovakia was not interested. In the case of the Russians and Ukrainians, however, Czechoslovakia respected what the Soviet Union said: that they were legitimately sentenced and that intervention for them was not appropriate. Bystrov, however, is right in saying:

What could the Czechoslovak offices do other than put together lists and try to hand them over to the Soviet Union? With hindsight of the programme and the system of interior and international repressive despotism of the Soviet Union there clearly does not appear any possibility to do for the abducted Russian émigrés “more” or at least “something.” But the knowledge at that time of Soviet calculations concerning the total liquidation of antagonists of “every kind” and the unscrupulous vigor of the NKVD and other repressive organs of the Soviet Union was very limited and therefore “historic” hopelessness was not in place—as long as the slightest possibility of a political reaction existed.²³⁹

Vladimír Bystrov came to the conclusion that Czechoslovak society was unprepared for Soviet arrogance. The Czechoslovaks were taken by surprise, turning into impotent lookers-on during a *fait accompli*. Deportation was perceived as a part of the excesses accompanying the end of a war and a direct attempt by the victors to extract the greatest possible political advantage from their military success. The Czech authorities did not dare to put up any resistance because by doing so they would be putting their relationship with a powerful ally at risk. The Soviet approach even suited some sections of society. According to Bystrov, the outcome was that no decisions were made to protect people from the reckless behavior

of the Soviet security organs, and no principled rejection was expressed concerning this disregard of international law and sovereignty. All that was pointed out was that the image of the Soviet Union would be damaged by such inept tactics, and that this would be detrimental for its long-term intentions in Czechoslovakia. The kidnapping of Czechoslovak citizens was dealt with only at the level of formal administrative bureaucracy (negated by the subservience of some Czechoslovak political powers to Soviet repression). Attempts to find out from the Soviet authorities what had happened to some of the abducted and requests for their release were for the most part flagrantly obstructed by the Soviet Union.²⁴⁰

Bystrov deduces from this that the abduction of the Russian and Ukrainian émigrés represented a failure of the structures of state and politics of the Czechoslovak Republic, which were without power and unable to defend their sovereign territory from another state's execution of its rights; nor were they able to protect foreigners to whom the Czechoslovak Republic had offered and provided refuge when they were forced to leave their own country. According to Bystrov, these abductions can be seen as the first signs of agreement on the part of Czechoslovak political and state structures and Czechoslovak society with the suppression of those who criticized Soviet reality and opposed the Communist vision of the future. Similarly, they marked the first acceptance of an assault on postwar continuity with the democratic ideal and moral values of the Czechoslovak state's original principles.²⁴¹

Was There a Failure of Czechoslovak Diplomacy?

Bystrov holds that Czechoslovak opportunism as regards the Soviet Union was similarly evident in the failure of Czechoslovak diplomacy to negotiate the repatriation of Russian and Ukrainian émigrés. It is undeniable that too much regard was paid to the Soviet Union. However, from surviving materials we see that interventions really were made for these deportees; lists of their names were put forward and supplemented by affirmations of the Ministry of the Interior agreeing with their return. From the start of negotiations about repatriation, materials were presented to the Soviet side regarding "members of the Russian and Ukrainian emigration who have Czechoslovak citizenship or who have lived for years in Czechoslovakia and have a family here." I think that this group of deportees was not part of the Munich syndrome, nor was it linked with the Tiso regime, and that therefore the attitude of the Beneš establishment was much more favorable to them than to Czechoslovak citizens of German and Hungarian

ethnicity. We constantly come across the attitude in Czechoslovak official places that the state was not interested in Hungarians and Germans. As far as I know, no such formulation was used in connection with Czechoslovak citizens who were originally Russian or Ukrainian émigrés. There are exceptions in cases where those concerned may have collaborated with the Nazis, but these were individual cases and never applied to a group. The Soviet side never allowed itself to be persuaded to repatriate a specific individual. Even when Czechoslovak diplomats expressed the strongest possible arguments about the civic and political irreproachability of a particular person, this reasoning never led to his or her release. The Soviet side always had a reason to hand which no one could do anything about: they claimed to have no information about the person concerned. In this way they could, and did, freeze any negotiation. Only the Soviets decided who would be released, and when. If the Soviet Union decided that outstanding individuals of the White Emigration had to be extracted from Czechoslovakia, no amount of argument would overturn this decision. Czechoslovak diplomacy failed to use broader international pressure; in this respect it failed with other deported civilians, too. There was too much opportunism with regard to the Soviet Union in postwar Czechoslovakia; too many scruples and too little insistence.

The Beneš establishment had some interests in common with the Communists; or perhaps it would be better to say that the Communists made use of some of the Beneš interests in a way advantageous for their own political gain. I believe that in the course of negotiations over Russian and Ukrainian deportees Czechoslovak diplomacy proceeded as with other Czechoslovak civilian deportees. However, as soon as the Soviet Union let it be shown officially that these people were sentenced for serious crimes against the Soviet Union and that they did not want interventions to be made for these people, the Czechoslovaks stopped intervening. It is almost out of the question in diplomacy to force another state to continue negotiations if that state clearly indicates that it does not want to continue negotiations about that particular matter and gives reasons for it, even though we know that the reasons given do not correspond to the truth. This applies all the more with a superpower such as the Soviet Union at that time.

2. Subcarpathian Rus and Transcarpathian Ukraine

The Constitutional Position and the Right to an Option

We come across a number of terms in this book which should be explained. During the interwar period this territory was called Subcarpathian Rus and was one of the four self-governing lands of Czechoslovakia (the others being Bohemia, Moravia-Silesia and Slovakia). The capital city of Subcarpathian Rus was Uzhhorod. Between 22 November 1938 and mid-March 1939 this territory had an autonomous statute under the name Carpathian Ukraine. It was the period after the First Vienna Award, when the southern part of Slovakia and the southern part of Subcarpathian Rus were attached to Hungary. The capital city of Carpathian Ukraine was Khust (Czech and Slovak: Chust), which was the seat of the autonomous government headed by Prime Minister Avgustyn Voloshyn. He, at the end of 15 March 1939, the day when Nazi Germany occupied Bohemia and Moravia and the day after the pro-Hitler independent Slovak Republic had been established, announced the independent Republic of Carpathian Ukraine, of which he became president. Three days later, on 18 March 1939, the Republic of Carpathian Ukraine was occupied by Hungary and Avgustyn Voloshyn withdrew to Prague. After World War II this territory became part of the Soviet Union as, under the name of Transcarpathian Ukraine, it was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. At the present time it is the Zakarpattia Oblast (Transcarpathian region) of independent Ukraine. We also come across the concepts of Ruthenians, Rusyns and Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Ruthenian (English) and Rusyn (the anglicized name used in a number of Slavonic languages) is the name given to the ethnic group living in Subcarpathian Rus—Transcarpathian Ukraine. The name Subcarpathian Ruthenia concerns Subcarpathian Rus and has an ethnographical, not a political meaning.

From time to time we come across an inexact designation of this territory in archival documents. Even many Czechoslovak government officials used the name to which they were traditionally accustomed. In this work the names are employed according to the historical context, while in quotations the name has been left as used by the original writer. This introductory note is intended to explain any apparent inconsistency.

According to the Czechoslovak constitution of 1920, the territory of Czechoslovakia formed a united and indivisible whole whose frontiers could be changed only by constitutional law. An indivisible part of this whole was, according to the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye of 10 Sep-

tember 1919, the self-governing territory of Subcarpathian Rus which was intended to have a broad autonomy—this, however, was never realized.

Karel Kaplan writes that the possible handing over of Subcarpathian Rus to the Soviet Union had been negotiated, plainly on the initiative of Edvard Beneš, during Beneš's Moscow conversations with Stalin in December 1943, and again on 21 and 23 March 1945 during the meeting of Beneš and Jan Masaryk with Molotov. The issue of Subcarpathian Rus was discussed in Moscow in connection with preparations for the new governmental program. Anchored in this was the statement that "the government will ensure that the issue of Subcarpathian Rus will be based on what the inhabitants of the country themselves want."²⁴² The right to opt for Czechoslovak citizenship was given only to Czechoslovak citizens of Czech or Slovak ethnicity and to soldiers of Russian or Ukrainian ethnicity who had served in the ranks of the Czechoslovak Army in World War II, and members of their families living on the territory of Subcarpathian Rus. It was possible to choose an option until 1 January 1946; those who had opted then had to move to the state whose membership they had obtained within twelve months of receiving approval from the Ministry of the Interior.²⁴³ This stipulation was reciprocally valid for persons of Ukrainian and Russian ethnicity living on the territory of Czechoslovakia (in Slovak districts) who had the right until 1 January 1946 to opt for citizenship of the USSR.²⁴⁴

The joint declaration of the Yalta Conference and above all the Declaration on Liberated Europe and other documents from the negotiations of the "Big Three" stated that all territorial claims should be negotiated and carried out after the war in connection with the signing of peace treaties. However, in a number of cases this decision was not held to. The Soviet Union acted in its own interests as soon as the Red Army entered the relevant territory. One of these was the boundary between the USSR and Poland, where Stalin insisted the boundary lay on what was known as the Curzon Line. There was then the incorporation of parts of Romanian territory (Bessarabia and Bukovina) and the annexation of Sub Carpathian Rus.

One Story Out of Thousands

The following story illustrates the Soviet Union's annexation of Subcarpathian Rus: on 9 July 1947 the head of the 4th European Department of the MID, A.M. Alexandrov, advised Golubev that the Czechoslovak citizens Shtefan Domnich, Petr Kurnuty, Shtefan Dorvolpey, Filipp Dragushnitsa

and Ivan Kovach had written to Deputy Sasunov of the Supreme Soviet. They explained in their letter that at the beginning of the war they were mobilized for work in Hungary; were then taken to Germany where, at the end of the war, they were liberated by the Americans; who then handed them over to the Soviets to be sent to Czechoslovakia. Instead of that, they were for some reason sent to Pervouralsk in the Sverdlovsk region. Together with the draft of Alexandrov's report, now in the archive of the MID, we have at our disposal a letter sent by Golubev's deputy to the chief of GUPVI USSR General Lieutenant T.F. Filipnov. In this letter Golubev's deputy asks that the case be examined. Eventually the persons named really were found. On 6 September 1947 GUPVI wrote to the MID, saying:

The persons named were not and are not in the camps of the MVD. According to a communication from the UMVD of the Sverdlovsk region, the persons named relate to a contingent of repatriates and can be found in operative records in Pervouralsk GO MGB, Sverdlovsk region. In the course of a conversation with them it was ascertained that they are Ukrainians who want to return to the Uzhgorod region, which they somehow thought belonged to Czechoslovakia.²⁴⁵

Treaty of 29 June 1945

The treaty between the Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR about the annexation of Trans carpathian Ukraine to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was signed on 29 June 1945, ratified by the National Assembly on 22 November 1945 and by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 27 November 1945. From the entry of the Red Army on this territory in autumn 1944 (thus for a period of at least half a year) this territory should have been de jure Czechoslovak territory and its population Czechoslovak citizens.

It is a fact that under the given conditions Czechoslovakia had hardly any chance to assert its sovereignty on the territory of Subcarpathian Rus, which was from 1938/1939 until the arrival of the Red Army a part of Hungary. Although the question of the annexation of this territory was still in negotiation, the Soviet Union took the administration of this territory into its own hands. According to the principles worked out by the Allies, there should not have been any territorial changes carried out before the peace conference at the end of the war, and the original borders should have been valid until this anticipated peace conference. Nevertheless, in the case of Czechoslovakia's borders previous to 30 September 1938, the Soviet advance into Subcarpathian Rus was accepted by the Allies.

Deadline for the Option and Resettlement and the Soviet Influencing the Option

Alexandrov informed Molotov that the possibility to choose between Czechoslovakia and resettlement in the Transcarpathian Ukraine was coming to an end.²⁴⁶ He wrote that up until 20 August 1947, out of 6,424 persons eligible to choose, 4,818 had been resettled; 1,253—with a view to the concession of Czechoslovakia in the course of establishing the demarcation line—“did not need” to express an option; an option had been refused to 270 persons; and eighty-three had either given up, died, disappeared or been arrested. Alexandrov states in conclusion that the action ran in harmony with the treaty about Transcarpathian Ukraine of 29 June 1945, but that the deadline for resettlement, at first set for 1 January 1946, was twice extended at the request of the Czechoslovak authorities. Haste on part of the Soviets is again apparent—those two extensions had only lasted a few weeks; on the first occasion from 1 January to 1 March 1946, and then until 1 April 1946.

A number of sources say that the Soviet authorities tried to influence the course of the option and to prevent people moving to Czechoslovakia. An incident in autumn 1947 brings to light an interesting detail in which Counselor Jiří Kašpárek of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow went to the MID with information—essentially a complaint—that the local administration in Transcarpathian Ukraine was trying to prevent persons from exercising their option to leave, according to the treaty of 29 June 1945. Alexandrov, head of the 4th European Department, reported Kašpárek’s complaint to Vyshinsky.²⁴⁷ I.D. Petrushchak, representative of the Transcarpathian regional executive committee, was invited to the MID in September 1947. He naturally denied that such a thing was happening. It is interesting that this time the Soviet authorities themselves “explained [to Petrushchak] that such an approach was incorrect.” The situation was probably so tense that this “explanation” was an attempt to save the Soviet Union’s face while they were occupied in putting pressure on the population of the Transcarpathian Ukraine to opt for the Soviet Union. Alexandrov informed Vyshinsky about Kašpárek’s complaint and Petrushchak’s denial on 2 January 1948.²⁴⁸ This case is in its way exceptional because the Soviet Union usually vehemently denied any sort of negative phenomena. The Soviet authorities always took vigorous action in cases of Soviet citizens secretly crossing the border into Czechoslovakia,²⁴⁹ including sharply formulated complaints along diplomatic lines.

Deportations from Subcarpathian Rus

Vladimír Bystrov writes²⁵⁰ that in the given period a great many people who were de jure Czechoslovak citizens were arrested and deported to the Soviet Gulag. They were of various ethnicities (Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Slovak, Czech, German) and of various political orientations, but by and large people whom the Soviet Union was interested in removing.

Like Bystrov, I am very skeptical about the possibility of ascertaining the number of people at that time arrested and deported, people who theoretically should have been counted among the deported Czechoslovak civilian population. Some authors mention as many as tens of thousands, which I think is an overestimate when compared with the total population of that territory. Mečislav Borák, at the conference “The Fates of Czechoslovak Citizens in the Former USSR,” organized by the Silesian Museum in Opava and the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic on 20 February 2002, estimated the deportation from Subcarpathian Rus at 40,000 persons. We must keep in mind that, with small exceptions, academic research has not yet focused on the arrests and deportations from Subcarpathian Rus,²⁵¹ and we know from experience that original estimates of deportees are for the most part considerably exaggerated.

These deportations could not even have become the object of intervention of Czechoslovak diplomacy. At the time when negotiations over deportees from Slovakia at the level of the Foreign Ministry began to get going, the territory of Subcarpathian Rus had already become Transcarpathian Ukraine and been incorporated into the USSR. The people who called it home were now citizens of the Soviet Union.

3. Czechoslovak Silesia: The Teschen, Hlučín and Kravaře Regions

Volksdeutsche

Beginning with the Munich dictate, and afterwards, after the German occupation of Poland, the regions in north of Moravia near the border with Poland became part of Nazi Germany. Since a large percentage of the population living in those territories was registered as what was known as *Volksdeutsche*, most of the men were called up into the German Army and many became prisoners of war in the Soviet Union. In addition, many inhabitants were sent to work in Germany and thus to some extent suffered a similar fate to the Slovaks taken for defense work in Hungary or people assigned as *Levente*, who fell into the category of prisoners of war.

The Soviet government passed a resolution that persons of German ethnicity should be transported for forced labor in the Soviet Union without regard to citizenship, and this also applied to the Red Army after its advance into the territory of Teschen Silesia, Hlučín region (German: Hultschin, Hultschiner Ländchen) and Kravaře region (German: Kuhländchen). Even though the principle of Czechoslovakia retaining its prewar borders should have held valid during the advance of the Red Army into this territory, confusion reigned here at the end of the war. Many people who had been considered to be Czechoslovak citizens were deported, for the most part by SMERSH, into the Soviet Union. The Czech–Polish aversion also played a role and only in exceptional cases did inhabitants suffering under Soviet repression look for help from the Czechoslovak authorities.²⁵²

Even though these were Czechoslovak citizens, there has been no serious research on the extent of the deportation of the civilian population from this territory. As our experience shows with deportations from Slovakia, lists of requests for repatriation are very important for an estimate of the extent of deportations. These, however, are missing in the case of the Teschen, Hlučín and Kravaře regions. The sources I found relating to cases of internment and deportation of Czechoslovak citizens from these territories concern only individuals and it is impossible to get a picture of the situation as a whole.²⁵³

In the course of presenting repatriation materials to the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovak government made a special point of citizens from the Teschen, Hlučín, and Kravaře regions, in the case of whom a more “favorable” treatment was proposed, because of the many years of “Germanization” of this region. At the same time it was said that: “It was very

difficult in the internment camps in the USSR to show their ethnicity and repatriate them to Czechoslovakia.”²⁵⁴ Nevertheless, on the basis of the Beneš decrees after World War II, a considerable number of German-speaking inhabitants of this territory were dispossessed and deported.²⁵⁵

Some Life Stories

Several individual cases I have recorded concern men born in the years 1922, 1923 and 1927 who were of Czech ethnicity but had to join the German Army and fell into the clutch of the Red Army. In every case the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry agreed with their repatriation and although in the correspondence the camp where they were held was directly named, the Soviet side insisted repeatedly that their whereabouts were unknown. One of these men was repatriated to Saxony and eventually, in 1950, arrived home.²⁵⁶ The last news of another was from the Crimea in 1944; there has been no trace of him since then. Jan Volný's father searched for him even through the German investigation services, which ascertained his name and the number of his camp; the Ministry of the Interior permitted his repatriation and the Czechoslovak embassy made an intervention for him, but the Soviet side denied he was there. In this situation the Foreign Ministry advised the family to turn to the Red Cross, but we know that the chances of finding anyone through the Red Cross were minimal.

Among the deportees were often people who had been pressed into the German Army and who had deserted in the course of their retreat in the final phase of the war and returned home, where they were captured by the Red Army. As Vladimír Bystrov records, these people were for the most part accused of espionage or of activities on behalf of the enemy, sentenced to many years imprisonment, and rehabilitated in the 1960s.

I. CZECHOSLOVAK–SOVIET REPATRIATION NEGOTIATIONS

1. Flouting of the Czechoslovak–Soviet Treaty of 8 May 1944 by the Soviet Union in 1945

A wholesale deportation of Czechoslovak civilians could not have been unknown to the Czechoslovak authorities, and right from the start it was a permanent point of the negotiations of Czechoslovak politicians and diplomats with Soviet representatives. It was not the only item on the agenda of postwar negotiations with the Soviet Union, but nor was it insignificant or marginal, and according to the first postwar Czechoslovak ambassador to Moscow, Jiří Horák, the repatriation of deported Czechoslovak civilians was a priority for the embassy. However, the Czechoslovak position in these negotiations was weak, and determined by the inclusion of Czechoslovakia in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak authorities were cautious and submissive vis-à-vis their big Slavonic brother and liberator, and aware of the growing influence of Communists in key positions of state administration. It is no wonder that in spite of all the personal dedication and endeavors of several diplomats and officials who had the repatriation agenda in their care, the return of deported Czechoslovak citizens rested in the hands of the Soviet Union.

In February 1945 the situation still appeared relatively hopeful for Czechoslovak citizens interned by the Red Army; this would at least seem to follow from what the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Matters of Repatriation Lt. General Konstatntin D. Golubev wrote on 24 February 1945 to the current head of the 4th European Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Zorin, who in April 1945 became Soviet ambassador to Czechoslovakia:

Czechoslovak citizens and prisoners of war liberated by the Red Army from German captivity must be urgently handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities. It is essential we carry out the operation immediately so we can empty our repatriation collection

points, overfilled as they are, and at the same time relieve the care of supplying and securing these contingents. It is essential that a reception center is assigned to us on Czechoslovak territory. We would be prepared to accept Czechoslovak repatriation representatives at our collection points to help in this work.²⁵⁷

Even though Golubev is writing about a different group of inhabitants from the deported civilians with whom we are primarily concerned, it is useful to bear in mind that these repatriates were liberated from German captivity at the same time as they fell into the hands of the Red Army and the NKVD, which had unlimited power on liberated territory, and that many of these repatriates were deported to forced labor camps in the USSR.

It was just then, on 19 May 1945, that Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs Andrey Vyshinsky wrote a positive proposal in reply to the request from the Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow about repatriation—at that time it concerned the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens who had reached Buzuluk and Rakitnoe as refugees.²⁵⁸

Some weeks later the situation looked different again. A memorandum of 26 June 1945—marked “Secret,” like most Soviet documents—which the new head of the 4th European Department Abramov addressed to Deputy Vyshinsky²⁵⁹ holds a completely different opinion concerning the participation of Czechoslovak representatives. He writes that as the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens conducted by the Soviet authorities is already nearing its end, he considers the proposal of the Czechoslovak embassy to name Czechoslovak representatives to solve repatriation questions to be “out-dated.”²⁶⁰ However, the truth was that while repatriation from German camps might possibly have been almost finished, negotiations about repatriation from Soviet camps had only just started and were to last a number of years.

May and June 1945

In the first days and weeks after the Liberation, Czechoslovak diplomats and politicians frequently negotiated with the Soviet ambassador, Valerian Zorin. The state secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Communist Party member Vladimír Clementis (1902–1952), and often the pro-Communist Prime Minister Zdeněk Fierlinger (1891–1976) and other politicians spoke with him several times a week. A range of issues was discussed: the costs of keeping units of the Red Army in Czechoslovakia, Soviet war booty in Czechoslovak territory, credit contracts between the

Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR, the withdrawal of the American Army, various border and demarcation issues, property issues, and a number of other problems which had a direct relationship to the situation immediately after the end of the war. The problem of repatriation, whether in the wider concept of postwar consolidation, or more specifically as the handing over of Czechoslovak citizens from the NKVD to the Czechoslovak authorities, also appeared on the program. This was not, however, the only theme, or even the main one; it was simply mentioned. Only fragmentary information about these problems has survived from the first days after Liberation. On 20 May 1945, for example, Zorin told Fierlinger that the Czechoslovak authorities should give directions that all Czechoslovak repatriates from territory occupied by the Red Army should turn to the Soviet repatriation authorities, who would apparently ensure a prompt return home. It seemed that the Soviet government itself had an interest in expediting repatriation of foreign citizens. On 23 May 1945 Clementis informed Zorin that an injunction had been passed in Slovakia about the punishment of collaborators and he was therefore raising the question of all Czechoslovak citizens held by the NKVD in Slovakia being handed over. Zorin reacted with a request for the translation of this injunction into Russian, saying he would advise them further.

At the end of May, however, cases concerning the deportation of civilians appeared on the desks of officials of the reestablished Czechoslovak administration. On 30 May 1945, discussions took place in the Ministry of the Interior with a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who reported that: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was informed about arrests of Czechoslovak citizens and of foreigners, with a request for an investigation as to where the persons held could be found."²⁶¹

The urgency of the problem of abducted civilians increased during May. By this time, deported Slovaks had already spent around three months in the Soviet Gulag and their families in Slovakia had lost hope of their early release. It was already clear that this was not a matter of short-term labor as the Soviets kept on insisting, but that family members had disappeared long-term or forever into the vast expanse of the Soviet Union.

On 5 June 1945, the Chief of Staff of the Czechoslovak armed forces General Bohumil Boček informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that there had been more cases of the Red Army arresting and deporting Czechoslovak citizens on the territory of the Republic, and asked the Foreign Ministry to intervene with Soviet ambassador Zorin, with reference to § 7 of the treaty of 8 May 1944. Boček requested that an end be put to these detentions and arrests, and that those who had already been detained

or deported be handed over to the Czechoslovak security organs without delay.²⁶² The Foreign Ministry reacted to Boček's initiative with a note handed to the embassy of the USSR on 7 June 1945. The Soviet Union was warned several times about the need to stop the deportations and to return the detained citizens before it ever reacted to this note. Particularly urgent was Clementis's reminder to Zorin on 24 July 1945 in the matter of Slovak citizens detained by the NKVD.²⁶³ The Soviet Union answered some three months later on 27 August 1945. It said that "according to reports from the competent Soviet authorities, around 30,000 prisoners of war of Czech, Slovak and Ruthenian ethnicity would very soon be released from prisoner-of-war camps and brought to Czechoslovakia."²⁶⁴

If the Soviet note was to be believed, the number of people to be released was very promising, but the note was extremely misleading. These were not civilians deported from Czechoslovak territory but prisoners of war held in prison camps *outside* the Soviet Union. There will be more details about the extensive repatriation thus announced later in this chapter. This sort of reply, which was not a reply, was not unusual in the course of negotiations with the Soviet side. To specific requests from the Czechoslovak side about facts and data concerning deported Czechoslovak civilians, the Soviet Union often replied with enormous, unchecked numbers of tens of thousands of people repatriated from all the countries occupied by the Red Army. At first sight, these replies appeared positive and constructive, but they only confused the situation. The Soviet Union similarly swept aside accusations raised at the United Nations or formulated by the Western Powers which criticized it for not keeping to agreements about repatriation deadlines and which required specific explanations.

In June 1945, a Czechoslovak governmental delegation traveled to Moscow for negotiations. More governmental delegations were there in 1946 and 1947, and every time the issue of the abducted citizens was placed on the negotiating table, naturally in different political contexts and alongside other issues which at that moment appeared more urgent. In 1945 the issues of the spoils of war, the expulsion of the Germans and Hungarians from Czechoslovakia and the absorption of Transcarpathian Ukraine into the Soviet Union were dominant. Deputy Prime Minister Ján Ursíny, a member of the delegation, spoke with Vyshinsky but was only told that the decision of the competent Soviet authorities would be communicated to the government of Czechoslovakia in the foreseeable future.²⁶⁵

August and September 1945

On 6 August 1945, the officers of the Foreign Ministry prepared for Vladimír Clementis an "Overview of Czechoslovak citizens arrested by organs of the NKVD on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, of which some are of Russian, some of Ukrainian, ethnicity." In their conclusion, they recommended a meeting between State Secretary Clementis and the Soviet ambassador.

The Foreign Ministry handed this material to the Soviet embassy on 11 August 1945 and asked the embassy to arrange for the relevant Soviet military authorities to provide a list of persons for the Czechoslovak judiciary.²⁶⁶

Two days later, on 13 August 1945, Clementis met Zorin as a personal follow-up to the memorandum. According to a report of the meeting, Clementis presented a number of documents to Zorin—telegrams, requests and certification issued by Communist Party officials and by the national committees. In the course of this, he drew attention to the fact that the matter had become extremely urgent and was causing a lot of unrest, especially in Slovakia, all the more so that in many cases the arrests were based on false information. Zorin replied that there was no point in intervening in individual cases and that there had to be a general solution which he (Zorin) had allegedly urged on several occasions.²⁶⁷

The next meeting between Clementis and Zorin took place on 22 August 1945. The focus of the discussion was the sending of the Minister of National Defense Ludvík Svoboda to Moscow for negotiations about the further stay of the Soviet Army on the territory of Czechoslovakia. Also discussed was the incorporation of Transcarpathian Ukraine into the Soviet Union, and the question of the release of the detained Slovaks reopened. Clementis wrote in his report that in the matter of arrested Czechs, Slovaks and Ukrainians, Moscow had already made a policy decision about handing them over to the Czechoslovak authorities. However, Zorin said that he requested more precise information on several unclear points in the category of those who had to be released.²⁶⁸

Because neither Clementis nor any other Czechoslovak diplomat was acquainted with this "general decision," and for the time being had no idea what it meant, we can doubt whether Zorin was telling the truth; the second possibility is that there had been a policy decision, but it was not what the Czechoslovak diplomats had been expecting. This "general decision" could equally as well mean *not* releasing deported Czechoslovak

civilians en bloc, forcing the Czechoslovak side to negotiate over every individual separately, and leaving the deported in the forced labor camps as long as possible. Naturally, this is only speculation. Maybe the Russian archives will one day reveal what the Soviet “general decision” really was. However, I think Zorin was not telling the truth about this general decision, because several years later, the Soviet side was still promising a general decision and the Czechoslovak side was still urging it.

On 18 September 1945, Clementis instructed the chargé d'affaires in Moscow, Jaroslav Hnízdo, to intercede with Vyshinsky for the immediate release of all Slovak and Czech citizens captured by the NKVD and deported from the Republic. Clementis reminded Hnízdo of Ursíny's intended intervention with Vyshinsky and that he himself would urge this matter with Zorin at least once a week. He reminded him that several weeks earlier Zorin had informed him that a general decision had been accepted in Moscow, but that there had been no return of the deported since that time. Clementis recommended Hnízdo to emphasize that the situation in Slovakia was politically intolerable, since it was known that there were innocent people among the deported, including Communists, partisans and soldiers. The situation was being abused by subversive elements to discredit the authority of the government. Clementis writes that it is even being misused against him personally, for stories were going round that he was deliberately delaying the release of the deported for political reasons (many of the deported were members of the Democratic Party).²⁶⁹

Hnízdo was received by Vyshinsky on 23 September 1945 and afterwards reported to the ministry that Vyshinsky had promised to intervene, that he would ask for a list of names of deported persons, and that the relevant list should be sent as quickly as possible to the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow.²⁷⁰ We come across this repeatedly. The time-tested tactic of Soviet diplomats was to promise progress and to request up-to-date lists, even though the ink was scarcely dry on the most recent list provided.

On 29 September 1945, Clementis informed the Office of the Commissioner in Bratislava about the latest negotiations with the Soviet side. He claimed he had been trying “ever since Košice” to release all Czechoslovak citizens held by the NKVD. He even affirmed that at that time he had given Zorin a list of 5,300 deported persons. This information appeared in the minutes of the government sitting a month later, but I have not been able to find out whether this list really was processed during the time the Czechoslovak government was based in Košice, and whether Clementis

did hand it over to the Soviet Union. It is possible that this claim by Clementis was not based on the truth.

Clementis spoke about a policy decision to release all deported Czechoslovak citizens, and said he had instructed the embassy in Moscow to push the matter. At the end he made it known that citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity had been identified in a list containing about 6,000 names and that this list would be sent to Moscow as soon as possible.²⁷¹

The issue of how to make the Soviet Union return deported Czechoslovak citizens appeared on the governmental agenda several times in 1945. For example, at the 50th sitting of the government on 3 September, Minister Svoboda and State Secretary Clementis were entrusted with discussing the release of detained Czechoslovak citizens with Marshal Konev. These discussions took place on 10 September 1945 in Baden near Vienna.²⁷²

October and November 1945

In October 1945 Deputy Prime Minister Monsignor Jan Šrámek tried to intervene through the Ministry of National Defense on behalf of fifty-seven persons, some of whom were Czech or Slovak, while the majority were Russian and Ukrainian. Among them was Avgustyn Voloshyn, who had allegedly been imprisoned in Racibórz. General Boček immediately urged their release with Marshal Georgy Zhukov, arguing that as Czechoslovak citizens they were subject to Czechoslovak jurisdiction. However, there was no response from the Soviet side.²⁷³

On 12 October 1945, the question of the deported Czechoslovak citizens was a specific point on the government agenda:

Release of Persons Detained by Soviet Organs

Deputy Ursiny points out that according to news recently received the Soviets are releasing Hungarian and Polish prisoners and detained persons in large numbers, whereas the same cannot be said concerning Czechs and Slovaks. These are mainly persons of Slovak ethnicity who were captured or detained. The Foreign Ministry requests these releases urgently, for it has not received any concrete news up to now. State Secretary Dr. Vladimír Clementis states that there has to be a distinction between civilians and prisoners of war. Insofar as civilians are concerned, they were intervened for as early as the Košice period, when Ambassador Zorin was handed a list of approximately 5,300 persons of which approximately 2,500 were Slovaks. An answer has been requested—sometimes four times a week—ever since. Deputy Ursiny himself also presented the matter to the People's Commissar Vyshinsky and from that time it has been requested at least twenty times. The Soviets basically agreed to the releases

and asked for lists to be provided. The Foreign Ministry submitted these lists, which it received from various delegations and from State Security. The Soviets now promise that they will select Czechs and Slovaks to be released from individual camps. In the course of their interventions the Foreign Ministry pointed out that no legal basis has been given for the detentions. Insofar as military personnel are concerned, approximately five weeks ago the state secretary received information from Ambassador Zorin that they were choosing from prisoner-of-war camps Czechs and Slovaks who had served in the Hungarian or Romanian Army insofar as they are Czechoslovak citizens and releasing them. Insofar as camps in Hungary are concerned, they are for the most part already free.

Prime Minister Zdeněk Fierlinger agreed that this had to be speeded up. Insofar as persons interned in the Soviet Union were concerned, they were themselves responsible for their state, inasmuch as during the purges carried out sometime before the establishment of the government in Košice, either they did not pass the test, or for other reasons did not want to join the Czechoslovak Army. State Secretary Lichner emphasized that it was not these people, but rather those who had been detained and abducted during the fighting in Slovakia, and especially complete working groups of Slovaks from Hungarian work camps.

The government enacted the following resolution:

The government charges the foreign minister and state secretary of the Foreign Ministry that they should in every possible way work for the early release of Slovaks and Czechs who are until now interned in Soviet internment camps, especially insofar as they are civilians interned during the fighting in Slovakia, and Slovaks who formed work groups in various Hungarian work camps. The minister and the state secretary should give the government a report on the results of their interventions at the earliest opportunity.²⁷⁴

The Foreign Ministry tried to insist that all deported Czechoslovak citizens should first be concentrated in one place and lists compiled and their repatriation negotiated, or at least that the Soviet authorities should prepare lists of Czechoslovak citizens in separate camps and then give these lists to the Czechoslovak authorities. Czechoslovak diplomats working at the ministry and in the embassy in Moscow repeatedly tried to implement this principle during negotiations with the Soviet side. Repeatedly they came up against reluctance and indifference in solving the repatriation of deported citizens by this method. As the embassy reported to the ministry in mid-October 1945:

The ministry has several times said that the Soviets here literally require the presentation of lists of reclaimed detainees and only on the basis of such lists are they willing

to start the search for detainees they would hand over to our organs. They consider the opposite approach, recommended by our ministry—that is, concentrating all detained Czechs and Slovaks in one place so they can be listed and checked by the Czechoslovak authorities—to be impracticable.²⁷⁵

The Soviets thus insisted right from the start that the Czechoslovak side must present lists of deported people and not until their presentation would the Soviet authorities be willing to negotiate about their repatriation. The two sides held antithetical approaches. The fact that in the end the Soviet side forced Czechoslovakia to its position had incalculable consequences which were cruelly reflected in the individual fates of the deportees. In my opinion the Soviet Union did not want to proceed to the proposed solution because it had no interest in repatriating the deportees, but rather in keeping them in forced labor camps. The Soviet authorities were perfectly capable of making lists of Czechoslovak citizens in the camps and giving them to the Czechoslovak side; records of internees according to ethnicity were made anyway, a fact confirmed by other authors.²⁷⁶ The Soviet side, however, held tenaciously to the approach most useful for it, and the Czechoslovaks in the end could not do otherwise than accept this principle of negotiation. However, in autumn 1945 the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry still hoped to agree with the Soviets a more flexible and primarily (in view of the merit of the case) a more just approach:

Meanwhile it is not possible to send lists of Czechoslovak citizens of Slovak ethnicity finding themselves at the present time in Russian detention camps while negotiations with the central Soviet organs are still not completed. For the time being, it was only possible to reach an agreement of the Czechoslovak chief of staff with the marshals of the USSR about the release of all Czechoslovak prisoners of war, including those who served in foreign armies. The embassy in Moscow requests that after the end of negotiations, that is, the conclusion of an agreement concerning the release and repatriation of all our citizens, precise lists of Czechoslovak citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity should be compiled separately within the bounds of possibility. It has, however, to be counted on that a search for Czechoslovak citizens and their collection at one point will be difficult for technical reasons and will require some time.²⁷⁷

That is what the Foreign Ministry wrote to the embassy in Moscow still in mid-September 1945. However, further developments led neither to the signing of an agreement about the release and repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens, nor to lists of the deportees being prepared by the Soviet organs for Prague.

The Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow then wrote to Prague:

After repeated interviews with representatives of the repatriation office of the USSR and representatives of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, it was again confirmed that both offices refuse to make the first steps toward repatriation of prisoners and internees in cases where the address for repatriation is not known to the Czechoslovak authorities.²⁷⁸

On 23 October 1945, Clementis noted that at his meeting with Zorin he informed him about the resolution of 12 October. Apparently, Zorin then told Clementis that despite all the telegrams and lists he had sent, he had not yet received any answers.²⁷⁹

On 2 November 1945, Clementis sent Ambassador Horák in Moscow instructions that he should urge the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID, often referred to as "Narkomindel") for the release of interned Czechs and Slovaks, and at the same time urge the transfer of the Volhynian Czechs to Czechoslovakia.

On 5 November 1945 a memorandum was prepared by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs of which only a draft version has survived, because Clementis decided it should not be passed to the Soviets and so it was lodged *ad acta*. However, the arguments the memorandum was going to use to persuade the Soviet side to order the return of the Czechoslovak deportees did not differ so much from those with which we are already familiar, and which we will still come across. It said that the failure to resolve this serious question was supporting hidden reactionary, undemocratic and anti-Soviet elements. These abused the understandable bitterness in Slovakia to create propaganda against the Red Army and the Soviet Union on the one hand and the Czechoslovak government on the other, the latter accused of being incapable of persuading the Soviet government that it was necessary to solve this issue.²⁸⁰

2. Czechoslovak and Soviet Information and Arguments in 1946

Jan Masaryk: Instructions for Ambassador Jiří Horák

By 1946 the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry and its embassy in Moscow had on the whole sufficient experience and know-how with regard to the difficult problem of the deportees. Negotiations about repatriation intensified and a number of deported civilians succeeded in getting home. However, the situation was far from being optimistic, for by now the deportees had a minimum of a year behind them living in the drastic conditions of the camps. Many had died during this time and thousands had years of internment ahead of them, or would even die in the camps.

Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk (1886–1948) had not involved himself too much in the matter of deported Czechoslovak citizens, leaving this to State Secretary Clementis; nevertheless, in several cases he did intervene. On 6 January 1946, a confidential telegram signed by Masaryk was sent from Prague to Ambassador Horák in Moscow.²⁸¹ Masaryk instructed him to urge a definitive reply from the Soviet side in the matter of releasing detained Czechoslovak citizens and prisoners of war of Czech and Slovak ethnicity. This telegram characterizes very vividly the official Czechoslovak position at that time. The ethnicity issue was a priority. An individual's role in an army on the side of Hitler's Germany did not disqualify him in any way; what counted was his ethnicity, even though deportations of civilians from Czechoslovak territory were explained by the alleged collaboration of these people with the pro-Hitler Slovak state. Vladimír Clementis said that in Czechoslovak foreign politics, "What is perhaps historically most binding is the fulfilling of the will and program of the National Front . . . that we want to have a national state of Czechs and Slovaks—that is, a state without Germans and Hungarians."²⁸²

In his telegram, Masaryk instructed Horák to emphasize that among those arrested there were many democratic and progressive people who had taken part in the resistance or supported the partisans, and who were arrested either by mistake or on the basis of false accusations for personal or mercenary reasons of the informers, who were themselves often politically unreliable. There really were informers who had been motivated by these base reasons. It was the cause of many personal tragedies, but it was impossible to investigate these circumstances properly and probably no one even tried to do so.

Masaryk further mentioned that several thousand Czechoslovak citizens from all walks of life had been deported by the Red Army; that re-

peated intervention with the Soviet authorities had been fruitless; and that a serious social problem had arisen, since many families had been left without a breadwinner. However, it was typical for the Czechoslovak position at this time that relations with regard to the USSR took priority over arguments about the illegality of the deportations. Masaryk emphasized in his telegram that these facts should not be misused by political reactionaries for anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda.

The frequency of interventions in the matter of the deported was very noticeable at that time and Czechoslovak diplomats virtually bombarded the Soviet side with their arguments. The Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow was the motor for repatriation. The urgency of the situation was felt more intensely here than in Prague, where a number of government bureaucrats, with Jan Masaryk at their head, tried not to annoy the Soviets or show them in a negative light. The Czechoslovak diplomats in Moscow had the Soviet reality right before their eyes, and those who were not as besotted with everything Soviet, such as Cultural Attaché Jarmila Glazarová and First Secretary Miloš Krno, did not have the slightest illusions.

Masaryk's instruction was carried out on 25 January 1946 by Horák, who informed Prague²⁸³ that in the matter of the internees he had repeatedly intervened with Vladimir Dekanozov,²⁸⁴ that he had reminded him of the extensive documentation he had placed before Vyshinsky in November 1945, and of his further intervention on 13 December 1945. As instructed, Horák emphasized to Dekanozov the difficulties this was causing for the Czechoslovak government. The Soviets naturally knew this and spoke of it without embarrassment. From autumn 1945 at least, Vyshinsky admitted to Horák that he knew the issue of the deportees undermined the authority of the Czechoslovak government, but it did not seem to matter to him, perhaps on the contrary. At that time the priority for the Soviet Union was to keep the mines of the Donbas going by the use of as many prisoners of war and civilians as possible, and it mattered little where they were deported from. Keeping the Czechoslovaks interned was on the whole easy for the Soviet government, and held no serious political problems. Horák reminded Dekanozov that the official press had already announced the repatriation of Alsatians, who had been captured with weapons in their hands and even called themselves Germans. However, it is possible that what mattered to the Soviet Union was the attitude of the French Communist Party—after its victory in the first postwar elections, the devisers of Communist strategies and tactics in the Soviet Union certainly saw it in a very rosy light. The USSR could not allow an anti-Soviet

and anti-Communist campaign to be unleashed in France, whereas it was not too worried about the loss of its image in Czechoslovakia.

Part of the repatriation diplomacy consisted of interventions. It was for the most part family members who turned by various paths to the Foreign Ministry, but there were also collective petitions from parishes and professional associations which were sent to various governmental institutions. The organizers of collective interventions did not hide their activity; on the contrary, they tried to mobilize public opinion in their support. This then influenced the political climate at home. These collective interventions could not be ignored by the Czechoslovak authorities and were used as a powerful argument for negotiations with the Soviet side. I have been unable to find out whether collective interventions by Czechoslovak citizens had a greater weight with the Soviet authorities.

Problems in Getting Exact Information

It is somewhat perplexing that the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow was not sufficiently equipped with the basic documentation essential for such a key agenda as repatriation. For example, on 28 January 1946, Horák sent an urgent telegram to Prague in which he asked that a courier should bring him as soon as possible the exact text of the treaty of 8 May 1944 about the relationship between the Czechoslovak administration and the Soviet supreme commander following the arrival of the Soviet troops on Czechoslovak territory.²⁸⁵ More than a year had passed since the treaty was signed. It was a grave error that in January 1946 the embassy still did not have the text of the treaty at its disposal.

The Czechoslovak diplomats in Moscow indisputably knew the provisions of this treaty; nevertheless, they could not be sure of being able to quote specific paragraphs with complete assurance. That definitely weakened their position where the Soviet diplomats (who were exceptionally stubborn negotiators) were concerned. Eventually the courier Pavlásek brought Horák the text of the treaty in Czech and in Russian.

Estimating the number of persons whose deportation the Czechoslovak side could prove must have been exhausting. The Soviets were all the time presenting data that were completely different from those provided by the Czechoslovaks. For example, on 30 January 1946 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs sent a memorandum saying that the Soviet authorities had carefully examined the data given to them by the Czechoslovak embassy in Memorandum no. 5137/45. The Soviet side flagrantly declared the data—the names of deportees collected from letters from

their families—to be exaggerated and not to represent the true state of affairs. In an appendix, the Soviets claimed that 482 Czechs and Slovaks who had previously been in internment camps had already returned home, and that 237 interned Czechs and Slovaks had been freed and sent home. According to the Soviets, the whole repatriation of deported Czechs and Slovaks had thereby ended, because there were only 513 Czechs and Slovaks remaining in the camps, all apparently active agents and accessories to the Hitlerites, who should be tried in court.²⁸⁶

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Summary List of Deportees

Most of the data for the Czechoslovak Memorandum no. 5137/45 was provided to the Foreign Ministry by the Presidium of the Slovak National Council (Slovenská národná rada, SNR) in Bratislava. Because the largest number of deported civilians was from Slovakia this issue was examined with special care. It seems that in 1945 and 1946 Slovak institutions prepared lists which included Hungarian and German deportees or prisoners of war, and in terms of repatriation did not differentiate as strictly according to ethnicity as the ministry did in Prague. The SNR prepared a list of arrested and deported citizens for the Foreign Ministry which was clearly a first attempt at a comprehensive list of the deported. This list was arranged according to district and contained more than 3,000 names of arrested and deported citizens, including Hungarians and Germans. The Foreign Ministry used this list to intervene for the deported and handed it over to the Soviet side, after deleting those of German and Hungarian ethnicity. I believe this list to be the one which Vladimír Clementis talked about at the end of September 1945 in Bratislava to the Board of Commissioners as the list already given to the Soviets during the Košice period (February to May 1945). Clementis, however, distorted the nature of this list, and exaggerated what was in it, because the list was not given to the Soviet side until later. If moreover the numbers given in this list were exaggerated and did not correspond to reality, what would the Soviets have had to say about a list of over 5,000 which Clementis had, in his own words, already given them? The Soviets, however, never reacted to Clementis's list of 5,000, while we do come across references by the Soviets to the data from the list in Memorandum no. 5137/45 many times. This list, supplemented with names about whom the Foreign Ministry had learned in other ways, then became the basis for further negotiations about deported Czechoslovak citizens. In the end, this list allegedly contained around 2,000 names of

people whose release was requested, and it was this list which the Soviet side indicated was excessive.

In the Archive of the Czech Foreign Ministry, a copy survives of a "List of Czechoslovak Citizens Detained by the Red Army and Deported beyond the Borders of the Czechoslovak Republic." This list is divided up according to district and parish and confined to Slovakia. It gives the names, dates of birth and date of arrest of the persons concerned. However, the list itself is not dated and there is no information about who prepared it. One must suppose that it is a product of a centrally organized action, when on the basis of instructions from the Ministry of the Interior, the national committees and police stations periodically drew up lists of persons who had been deported and, later, of persons who had returned. This centrally devised action took place for the first time in 1946 as a response to the stubbornness of the Soviet side which refused to start negotiations on repatriation until the Czechoslovak side had presented complete lists of citizens who had been deported to the USSR. The aim of the Czechoslovak diplomats had originally been to make the Soviet side present lists of those who had been deported, but they were not able to break down the reluctance of the Soviets. This list contains only 1,254 names²⁸⁷ and I have been unable to find a more extensive list. Insofar as this is the list mentioned above, the one the Soviet side thought to be excessive, then it is considerably shorter than the lists mentioned in the memorandum. This study will, however, show that there were many more victims of deportation to the USSR, and if there was a list of 2,000 names, it would still be only a quarter of all those deported.

The USSR Throws Doubt on the Czechoslovak Lists and Soviet Data

Here, as in a number of other documents, the Soviet side showed quite openly that it did not respect the stipulation of the treaty of 8 May 1944, according to which all Czechoslovak citizens had to be answerable for their actions to the Czechoslovak authorities. Not even agents of Hitler, should they be Czechoslovak citizens, were to be punished by deportation to the Soviet Union. We also know that many citizens were deported on the basis of slander, without due process of law, and that any trials—or quasi-trials—that had taken place had been held by the NKVD or the Red Army. That is precisely what the Czechoslovak side understood at the time. When Horák sent the memorandum quoted above to Prague he asserted in his commentary that he would, on the basis of the treaty of 8 May 1944, ask the Soviet authorities for citizens believed to be Hitlerite

accessories and agents to be handed over immediately for trial in Czechoslovakia. Because, however—according to Czechoslovak sources given to the Soviets by Horák—there were more than 1,900 names on the list, which the Soviets claimed to be highly exaggerated and not corresponding to reality, Horák asked that before starting his intervention, it should be clarified how many persons had meanwhile returned to Czechoslovakia. He wanted them to find out whether it was true, as the Soviet memorandum claimed, that 482 persons had returned and that 237 were on their way back. It is no wonder that Horák urgently needed the precise text of the treaty of 8 May 1944 and as far as possible, exact information about who had returned home and by what administrative method the return had been processed, and most of all he needed up-to-date information about persons who were still interned in the USSR. The Soviets were so reticent in the course of negotiation that Horák knew that without precise official information in his hands there would be no point in his intervention.

Soviet Data

The Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, in document ref. no. 21.833/II-1/46 signed by Vladimír Outrata on behalf of the minister, informed the Slovak National Council on 6 February 1946 of the information given by the Soviets, that 482 citizens had been sent to Czechoslovakia, that 237 were on their way, and that the remaining 513 would be tried for pro-Nazi activities. The Soviets now made it clear that they regarded the matter of the repatriation of deported Czechoslovak citizens as settled. The Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, however, pointed to the discrepancy between the Soviet and the Czechoslovak data. It hits one in the eye that the Soviet side acknowledged only 1,232 deported citizens (482+237+513), but that at the Foreign Ministry lists containing many times that number of names of demonstrably deported persons were mounting up. The Foreign Ministry diplomatically pointed out that the discrepancy could have come about through errors in giving ethnicity, by mixing deportees and internees with prisoners of war, etc., but that it could not accept the Soviet data. Therefore, as Horák requested, the Foreign Ministry required the Slovak National Council to prepare new and up-to-date lists. This time citizens of German and Hungarian ethnicity should not be outright eliminated from the lists, but be on special lists which should moreover be divided into lists of those who should subsequently be deported and those who had sworn loyalty to Czechoslovakia and therefore had the right to apply for Czechoslovak citizenship. This approach was, in the given conditions (an atmosphere of heightened national-

ism and of postwar emotion which was anti-German and anti-Hungarian but pro-Soviet), a relatively reasonable attitude which was not, however, always and everywhere respected. The Foreign Ministry promised the Slovak National Council that it would intervene for all Czechoslovak citizens, that is, even for those who were guilty of active cooperation with the Germans; in these cases, it would insist that they were handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities. There is an interesting note that the new lists are also necessary so that the Soviet authorities can be advised of citizens who "maybe from carelessness are not among those indicated as Czechoslovak citizens, and whose release, for this reason, might be delayed."²⁸⁸ Insofar the ministry thought of these citizens as being of German or Hungarian ethnicity, it would mean taking an approach which could give a number of people a chance to return home. Unfortunately, too often we come across formulations indicating that Czechoslovakia had no interest in the return of citizens of German or Hungarian ethnicity.

The Czechoslovak Delegation for the Liquidation of War Damage

The Czechoslovak Delegation for the Liquidation of War Damage also joined in the negotiations over Czechoslovak citizens held in internment camps in the USSR. At the end of January 1946 it was stated that there was still a considerable number of Czechoslovak citizens in the USSR who could be divided into: (a) prisoners of war, primarily soldiers in the former Slovak or Hungarian Army, including persons who were mobilized by the Germans or Hungarians into labor camps and were likewise captured during the advance of the Red Army, and (b) civilians (mainly Slovaks), who were arrested and deported to the USSR. The Delegation states that from summer 1945 the Czechoslovak government repeatedly acted with the aim of releasing both these categories and although the Soviet embassy in Prague gave notice as early as August 1945 that all Slovak captives would be released, repatriation was still not finished. A long interval had meant that it was only in recent months that several transports of repatriates had arrived in Czechoslovakia; there were, however, few officers among them. The slow pace of the repatriation caused difficulties for the Czechoslovak government, and the Delegation for the Liquidation of War Damage pointed out in this connection that the Soviet government had some time earlier announced the end of the repatriation of Hungarian and Austrian captives.²⁸⁹

This and similar announcements by the Soviets always stirred up public opinion, causing a commotion in political and diplomatic circles.

Those states which had not been named, which usually included Czechoslovakia, made it known that their members had been neglected, and states which had been named were disturbed, for it was clear to them that the repatriation of their citizens could not have finished, because hundreds and thousands were still missing without any information being provided. The Soviet Union announced the end of repatriation of Hungarian prisoners in 1946, whereas throughout 1947 and in 1948 especially, transports of hundreds of men were being repatriated to Hungary. The Soviet Union offered no explanation for this contradiction—not to mention the fact that the repatriations had still not finished even at the end of 1948. Many prisoners and deported citizens did not arrive home until the amnesty following the death of Stalin in 1953, and some not even until 1955.

To return to the material of the Commission for the Liquidation of War Damage: concerning the category of civilian persons, it was observed that they were actually the victims of German and Hungarian violence and that they were interned mainly in the Donbas “in unfavorable conditions.” It seemed that the embassy in Moscow gave the Soviet side complete lists of these persons and indicated that there was a significant number of reliable citizens among them, including some who had supported the partisans or participated in the Slovak National Uprising, arrested on the basis of unreliable denunciations. We have come across this information several times already. The commission refers to the previously known data of Soviet provenance (1,232 interned Czechoslovak citizens, of which 482 had been released, 237 were being released and 513 were awaiting trial). Because, according to Czechoslovak sources, the number of the interned was much higher, the commission diplomatically wrote that probably a number of Czechoslovak citizens had been omitted from the Soviet evidence in error, which could have been a mistake about their ethnicity or the fact that when the Soviet data had been compiled these interned persons were not yet on the territory of the USSR. The commission writes that according to the most recent Czechoslovak findings there were 1,462 citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity, 2,366 Hungarians and 1,300 Germans of both categories interned in the USSR up to now. In 1946 the officials of the Liquidation Commission could not have had our present-day knowledge of the “programmatic and systematic qualities of the interior and international repressive will of the Soviet Union,”²⁹⁰ but nevertheless they had no problem in seeing that there could not be so many people missing by error alone. It would be difficult to account for this discrepancy by mistakes in writing down the ethnicity, and the second argument cannot work at all—those deported were moved relatively quickly to camps in the Soviet Un-

ion, and according to surviving evidence it could not continued for much longer than around Easter. Internment, interrogation, the organizing of transport and even the protracted journey to the camp sometimes lasted two or three months, but one could not suppose that such a striking difference in numbers could be brought about by those interned still not having arrived in the USSR in 1946.

The Czechoslovak Delegation for Liquidation closed their analysis by proposing that all Czechoslovak citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity, whether civilians or prisoners of war, held on the basis of § 8 of the treaty of 8 May 1944, should be handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities as soon as possible. In the case of those persons who should stand before a Soviet court, the Czechoslovak government assumed that only those guilty of acts against the Red Army in the war zone would be subject to the jurisdiction of the Soviet courts. The delegation proposed that the Soviet authorities should on each occasion inform the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow of such judicial procedures against such Czechoslovak citizens, so that they could look at the documents and provide the necessary evidence and legal representation for the accused. In conclusion, the Delegation mentioned that the Soviet embassy in Prague had asked the Czechoslovak authorities to make known to it cases when a Soviet citizen was sentenced to prison in Czechoslovakia, proposing that Soviet nationals imprisoned in Czechoslovak prisons should be released and repatriated to the USSR.

The report by the Czechoslovak Delegation for the Liquidation of War Damage—possibly the most clearly of all Czechoslovak documents of a similar nature—shows inadequate knowledge of the problems, inadequate knowledge of the situation in the Soviet Union, and the helplessness of the argumentation. The authors of this report apparently copied complete passages from the Foreign Ministry's documents. It is impossible not to notice that some of the arguments "travel" from one document to another and are used in an almost formulaic way; as, for example, the reference to the detention of reliable citizens who in many cases had been involved in the Slovak National Uprising, who had supported the partisans, and who had subsequently been arrested on the basis of untrue denunciations by people who were often themselves compromised, and so on. Information about memoranda which had been presented and about the numbers given by the Soviet and the Czechoslovak sides was clearly copied in the same way. However, the unqualified argumentation and final proposals throw doubt on the work of the Liquidation Delegation. I have already remarked critically on the explanations offered by the Delegation for discrepancies

in the number of the interned. Still greater superficiality is shown by the proposals for measures to be taken. The Delegation requests the early return of the internees and prisoners of war, thus mixing the two categories, since the repatriations of the prisoners and of the internees were being negotiated separately. The repatriation of deported civilians was dependent on their being named on a list and on approval of the lists, which was not the case with the prisoners of war. The delegation most likely could not know that when transports were handed over for repatriation, prisoners of war and deported civilians were often mixed together regardless of status. A much more serious inadequacy in its argument, however, was that it ignored Czechoslovak citizens of Hungarian and German ethnicity, who formed the majority of prisoners of war from Czechoslovakia—and the Hungarians, moreover, a significant part of the deported civilians. We could further argue that there is no mention at all of Czechoslovak citizens of Russian and Ukrainian ethnicity, although a number of other documents, except for those most thoroughly prepared and of the highest quality, overlooked them as well. Furthermore, § 7 of the Czechoslovak–Soviet Treaty is not cited anywhere in the material of the “Liquidation Delegation.” The ignorance of the members of the Delegation is most clearly demonstrated in their concluding proposal, that the Soviet authorities should always notify the embassy of court proceedings against detained Czechoslovak citizens and that they make the documents available to them. It is hardly necessary to point out the unrealistic nature of this request when faced with the reality of the Soviet regime.

Efforts at Obtaining Reciprocal Information about Those Arrested and Imprisoned

On 12 February 1946, Clementis instructed Horák to ask the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs for new Soviet lists which could be compared with the new Czechoslovak lists. Horák had to request that the Soviet side always gave information regarding Czechoslovak citizens sentenced in a Soviet court, in the same way as the Soviet authorities requested information concerning their own citizens sentenced in Czechoslovak courts. This instruction derived from the negotiations of the Liquidation Delegation a short time previously. To arrive at reciprocal information about this matter, however, was a Sisyphean task; one could say that persuading the Soviet side to behave in the way it required from Czechoslovakia was out of the question. “Information about the History and Cur-

rent State of Mutual Exchanges of Information Concerning the Arrest and Imprisonment of Czechoslovak Citizens in the USSR and Soviet Citizens in the Czechoslovak Republic from 14 February 1948,"²⁹¹ which the Czechoslovak Ministry of Justice prepared at the request of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry and which it handed over to on 14 February 1948, helps a great deal toward clarification of this matter.

It is clear from this document that the issue had existed for many years, since it goes back as far as 1927. The original initiative in 1927, that information should be shared about arrests and imprisonment, came from the Soviets, and Czechoslovakia at that time welcomed it because Czechoslovak citizens had been arrested and imprisoned in the USSR much more frequently than the other way round. When, however, it came to verbal negotiations on this issue at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs it turned out that the Soviet side did not want to commit itself to reports about Czechoslovaks and that it wanted to maintain the previous practice, when it would give information about the arrest of a Czechoslovak citizen only if it had a report on him. It seems that from 1931 to 1939 lists of Czechoslovak citizens who had been arrested, imprisoned and sentenced came systematically from the Soviet Union (for example, sixty-five in 1931, 212 in 1939), which is evidence that the Czechoslovak representation in Moscow really had received information from the Soviet authorities and that it could intervene with the Soviet authorities. There is documentation on this. However, this giving of information relied on a verbal agreement and mutual practice, and was not laid down by any written agreement. From 1939, however, not one single arrest of a Czechoslovak citizen was reported, and the Czechoslovak Ministry of Justice was therefore unable to give an opinion as to whether Czechoslovakia still had an interest in the former mutual practice. The Soviet side, on the other hand, showed interest in cases that were reported to the Soviet embassy of the capture of Soviet citizens. From the point of view of reciprocity the Czechoslovak Ministry of Justice therefore recommended that the former practice should be renewed from the Soviet side (even though it relied on a verbal agreement), especially if the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow found out that Czechoslovak citizens were being arrested in the USSR. The last sentence is especially worthy of our attention. It sounds as though the Czechoslovak authorities believed that, if from 1939 to February 1948 they had not been notified of one single case of the arrest of a Czechoslovak citizen, then for almost a decade there had not been a single case of arrest, imprisonment or sentencing of a Czechoslovak citizen in the Soviet Union. But we know that there had been hundreds of such cases during this period.

Slovaks from Hungary Interned in the USSR and Their Repatriation

On 1 March 1946, Clementis instructed the embassy in Moscow by telegraph that they should immediately “intervene with Narkomindel about speeding up the liberation from Soviet prison camps of those Slovaks from Hungary who on the basis of the agreement about the exchange of inhabitants decide to move to the Czechoslovak Republic.”

Clementis wrote that a special commission in Hungary was already working on the lists, that it was necessary to maintain the agreed deadlines, and that he had on the same day given Zorin in the Soviet embassy in Prague a memorandum on this matter. A copy of this memorandum was kept in the Foreign Ministry and is now at our disposal. We can see what arguments were put forward. In the introduction, the Czechoslovak Ministry writes:

The Czechoslovak special commission in Hungary which, on the basis of the Treaty about the Exchange of Inhabitants between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, carries out preparatory work for the transfer of the Slovak minority from Hungary, ascertained that numerous Slovaks, whom one might expect to move with their families from Hungary to Czechoslovakia, have still not returned from captivity. These are persons of Slovak ethnicity and Hungarian citizenship who were, during 1941–1945, mobilized into the Hungarian Army and sent to the Eastern front where they were captured.

The Czechoslovak memorandum argues that it would be in the interest of a definitive solution of Czechs and Slovaks in Hungary if the above-mentioned persons were transferred to Czechoslovakia with their families under the terms of the above-mentioned treaty. The Czechoslovak side intervened for the repatriation of these prisoners of war, as it wanted them first to be returned to their place of residence in Hungary where they would be added to the lists and at their request transferred to Czechoslovakia. There was a simple nationalist logic for this, at first sight complicated, manoeuvre. According to the treaty the same number of Hungarians had to be moved out of Czechoslovakia as those of Czech or Slovak ethnicity (it was assumed that the majority would be Slovaks) were moved at their own request from Hungary to Czechoslovakia. There were considerably fewer Slovaks living in Hungary than there were Hungarians in Slovakia, and the Czechoslovak government would rather have got rid of all the Hungarians in the same way as they had got rid of almost all Germans living in Czechoslovakia. Because this mass deportation from Czechoslovakia could not be carried out, the Czechoslovak government was probably trying to increase the number of Slovaks to be returned by including those being repatriated from the camps in the Soviet Union.

What was the reaction of the Soviet Union? The literature about the plans for resettling Hungarian inhabitants is relatively comprehensive. I would therefore like to document the development of Soviet attitudes in implementing a report prepared by Lavrishchev, an official of the 4th European Department of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Molotov on 25 June 1946.²⁹² Lavrishchev declares that on 22 June 1946, Jindřich Nosek, the Czechoslovak ambassador in Paris, visited Alexander Yefremovich Bogomolov. During World War II and in the postwar years Bogomolov was an important Soviet diplomat. In 1939–1940 he was head of the 1st Western Department of the NKID, from whence he was sent as counselor and later ambassador to France. From 1941 to 1944 he was envoy and later ambassador to the governments of the Allies in London, in the context of which he was Soviet envoy (1941–1943) and ambassador (29 January 1943 to 18 January 1945) to the Czechoslovak government in exile in London. After some years in Moscow, he was from 1952 to 1954 ambassador to Czechoslovakia.²⁹³ In Paris in 1946, Nosek gave Bogomolov a memorandum from the Czechoslovak government, asking the Soviets to agree to transfer 200,000 to 250,000 more Hungarians than was stated in the mutual exchange. Masaryk and Clementis apparently wanted to come to negotiations on this issue in Paris, and Czechoslovakia and Hungary were striving for the question to be discussed at a session of the Soviet of the Ministers. Lavrishchev also wrote that the Hungarians categorically disagreed with the Czechoslovak requirement, asking on the contrary for a broad minorities law. The memorandum includes a proposal for the position of the USSR:

1. To support the Czechoslovak requirement
2. To refute the Hungarian objection that Hungary could not find place for another 200,000 to 250,000 persons, moreover that they have the right to expel 500,000 Germans
3. Not to agree with the question of the Hungarian minority in Romania being discussed, on the grounds that the situation in Czechoslovakia cannot be a precedent

In the end, however, the Soviet government took the position that the issue of the captured Hungarian nationals belonged to the sphere of post-war relationships between the USSR and Hungary, that until the peace treaty was signed it was not possible to discuss this matter, and that Czechoslovakia did not have the right to intervene in the matter of these persons because they were foreign citizens.²⁹⁴

Ambassador Horák tirelessly put pressure on the Soviets to pay attention to the number of Czechoslovak interned citizens, but was unsuccess-

ful in his efforts to get from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs lists of Czechs and Slovaks who, according to the information from the Soviets, had already returned to their homeland. Nor did he manage to obtain the list of 513 Czechs and Slovaks who had allegedly been interned up to then and whom the Soviets wanted to put on trial. On 22 February 1946 Horák handed a memorandum to the 4th European Department into whose purview the Czechoslovak desk fell. The memorandum referred to the treaty of 8 May 1944 and in particular to § 7, and requested that these 513 persons be handed over to Czechoslovak jurisdiction. Furthermore, with reference to the fact that the Soviet embassy in Prague was always notified about cases when Soviet citizens faced a Czechoslovak court, he requested the same information from the Soviet side. However, we see from notes on the draft of the memorandum, that Horák could not get an answer from the Soviet side—he spent fourteen days urging the head of the 4th European Department, Pavlov, to answer his memorandum, and was still empty-handed at the end of April.²⁹⁵

Vladimír Outrata's Memorandum

A memorandum from the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry to the Ministry of the Interior modified the interpretation of the disparity between Czechoslovak and Soviet data about the number of deportations. Like the preceding document to the Slovak National Council, this memorandum was signed for the minister by Vladimír Outrata, who certainly influenced its formulation.²⁹⁶ It is dated 9 February 1946. Outrata decided to include deported Russians and Ukrainians in his document, because he refers to a list of approximately 2,800 names—that is, 800 more than he gave on 3 February 1946 to the Slovak National Council. There is no closer specification of his list and so we cannot be sure that the deported Russians and Ukrainians are in the list, although he does mention them in the text. However, Outrata also writes that the Foreign Ministry had received a memorandum from the Soviets containing only 1,200 names on the list of the People's Commissariat of the Interior. He explains the disparity by the fact that some of the Czechoslovaks were held administratively, not judicially, by the Soviets. These Czechoslovaks were held in concentration camps in Germany and Poland and not the USSR. They were not therefore included in the lists of Soviet judicial authorities and security organs because they fell under the competence of the Soviet military occupation organs in Germany where these Czechoslovak citizens are not documented. Vladimír Outrata supplements this somewhat clumsy explanation

with a hypothesis that these Czechoslovak citizens were held in Germany or Poland by Soviet organs for an uncertain length of time, originally perhaps until the Soviet units left Czechoslovakia. As, however, the Soviet military had by this time left the territory of Czechoslovakia, Outrata had the impression it would be better if the Czechoslovaks made a direct and official approach to the commanders of the Soviet camps in Germany and Poland. Outrata thought that this approach could be more effective than the usual diplomatic *démarche*. It is true that, through the Ministry of the Interior, many Czechoslovak citizens who had proved their national and political reliability were at this time released from camps in Ostrava, Racibórz and elsewhere. Maybe the Foreign Ministry was even a little jealous of the Ministry of the Interior's success, since Outrata wrote that the Foreign Ministry would "be grateful [to the Ministry of the Interior] if the SNB [police] would be kind enough to share their methods of approach and intervention, and similarly, the experience acquired by officials leading the action."

However, the tragedy was that most of the deported persons with whom we are concerned were not in Germany or Poland, where the intervention of a repatriation officer would have sufficed for their release, but in the Stalino district in the Donbas, enslaved in the mines. (The current name for Stalino is Donetsk, but in this book I have kept the name from the Stalinist era.)

A brief note about the camps in Upper Silesia, chiefly in Racibórz.²⁹⁷ These were used primarily for holding prisoners of war and, as the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry was informed by the Ministry of the Interior in April 1946, thanks to personal contacts and the efforts of the local offices of state security in Ostrava, 360 to 380 people were liberated from these camps.

In the summer of 1945 the Soviet side announced the release of 30,000 prisoners from camps in this area. A year later there was a statement that this action had not yet been finished; at the same time the repatriation of roughly one-hundredth of this number was recounted as a great success based on personal contacts and outstanding effort. We now find out that "the camp in Racibórz was dissolved, the internees and commanders carried off no one knows where, communication broken off."²⁹⁸ I would venture to say that they were carried off to the Gulag in the USSR.

Updating of the Lists in 1946

In February 1946 the Czechoslovaks began to compile updated lists of deported citizens so they could have in their hands conclusive material for negotiating with the Soviets, who insisted that the issue of the repatriation of deported persons had already been concluded. The Soviet querying of the Czechoslovak data seriously complicated the whole situation and led to more procrastination. The previous complete lists dated from the end of summer 1945, meaning they were at the most half a year old and there is no way that most of the deportees could have returned home so soon. If Czechoslovak citizens were for the most part deported in the period from January to May 1945 and the predominant majority was sent to the mines in the Donbas, there was no way in which so many could have returned home in such a short time for the lists presented by the Czechoslovak authorities to be queried. One of the biggest waves of repatriation took place in the summer and second half of 1946, so these people could not have affected the nature of the lists at the beginning of 1946. The Soviet Union, in asking the Czechoslovaks for exact lists and itself refusing to supply them systematically, complicated and prolonged negotiations about repatriation. Clementis urged Horák to intervene for the Slovak prisoners of war, because in the meantime the sick and debilitated had been released. Clementis could not have failed to mention to Horák in this context that public opinion in Slovakia was seriously disturbed by the fact that many innocent people and reliable citizens were still missing.²⁹⁹

Members of the Slovak Technical Division

The frustration, confusion and search for a way out of the situation at the end of the war is exemplified in the fate of the soldiers and officers of the former Slovak Technical Division, disarmed by the German Army at the end of the war because the Germans considered it to be unreliable. These soldiers and officers were interned by the Germans in the prison camp in the Hungarian city Szeged. With the advance of the Red Army this camp fell into Soviet hands. It still seemed in September 1945 that the interned soldiers and officers of this Slovak Technical Division would be released, but at the same moment the Soviet embassy in Prague was promising this officially to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it could no longer have been true. As early as July this group of internees, estimated at 800 to 1,200 men, was taken inland in the Soviet Union via the port of Constanța in Romania and Odessa, and disappeared in the Stalino district in

the Donbas. At the same time, according to unproven reports received by the Foreign Ministry in Prague, groups of prisoners of war from other sections of the Slovak Army were carried off, together with a group of detained Slovak civilians.

It was the Commissariat of the Interior in Bratislava that first discovered the fate of the soldiers and officers of the Slovak Technical Division and negotiated for their repatriation, but without result. The matter was then taken up by the Foreign Ministry in Prague. On 8 November 1945 Clementis informed the embassy in Moscow by telegraph about the case of 800 deserters from the Slovak Army whom the Germans had "captured and sent to work in Hungary digging trenches." After their capture by the Red Army they were deported to the USSR. The Foreign Ministry in Prague tried first to negotiate this case through the Soviet embassy in Prague and was reassured by the Soviet reply that this group would soon be freed.³⁰⁰ However, the matter did not move forward and in the meantime the Foreign Ministry began to get letters from family members of these deported soldiers. On 20 January 1946 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow received instructions to search for this group and negotiate its return to Czechoslovakia. At this time, however, the embassy had in its possession a telegram from Clementis that said that the foreign minister had heard that there were about 800 Slovak deserters in the mines in the Lower Donbas in the Stalino district, and another 1,000 Slovak prisoners of war who were working under very difficult conditions in the location. This number seemed to Clementis to be exaggerated, but he wrote that in spite of Vyshinsky's promises, those so far released were physically exhausted and many had died on the journey. Horák straightaway intervened with the Soviet authorities for them to be released immediately and properly equipped for the journey. In the end, on 13 February 1946, Ambassador Horák handed a memorandum to the NKID in which he pointed out the discrepancy between the Soviet promises of September 1945 and the reality—which was, that the group had been transported to the mines in the Donbas in July, together with other prisoners of war from the Slovak Army and civilians deported from Slovakia.³⁰¹ We came across the members of the Technical Division already in this study. In the first part of this book, in the chapter about deportations from Slovakia, I covered their deportation in more detail and from a nondiplomatic angle.

The Czechoslovaks at least knew something about this group of internees. There were many about whom the Czechoslovak side did not have any information and about whom it was very difficult to get information. But, however meticulous the data might be, it would make no difference,

because the Soviet side did not intend to release anyone from the mines who had not been used up to their last ounce of strength. The winter of 1945 and the broken promise of the Soviets had fatal consequences for many of the deportees. At the time Ambassador Horák handed his note to the NKID in February 1946 many of the group had already died.

The Deported Inhabitants of the Hlučín Region

The following small episode highlights the manipulative method practiced by the Soviet Union toward the Czechoslovak diplomats. It brought tragedy in its wake for dozens of the interned inhabitants of the Hlučín region. Ambassador Zorin received a memorandum about them from the Czechoslovak foreign minister in summer 1945. He put it aside for six months, so the Foreign Ministry turned to the Soviets through the embassy in Moscow. The matter thus went round in a circle, because the NKID referred the matter back to Zorin in Prague. Zorin replied to his superior Vyshinsky that inasmuch as more than six months had gone by since the Czechoslovak memorandum had been handed in, he did not think it appropriate for the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry to ask for a list of these interned citizens, all the more since “no one knows what reply was given to the Czechoslovak side in the matter of the inhabitants of Hlučín and whether this reply was in any way positive.”

Zorin recommended that first the relevant Soviet authorities should explain why the inhabitants of Hlučín had been interned, and meanwhile a general reply be given to the Czechoslovaks. Not until this had been done would a proposal be made for the names of the internees to be presented, and not until then a specific assessment of this issue initiated.³⁰² This was a policy of procrastination, deferment and apparent unwillingness to move ahead. One can imagine that the first phase alone, finding out why the relevant Soviet authorities had deported the inhabitants of Hlučín, could drag on endlessly. The Soviets had the winning cards in their hands—the Czechoslovak diplomats could argue all they like, but it was up to the Soviets whether they wanted to release the internees or not.

Attitudes toward the Deportations and Public Opinion

The situation was grave and both the democrats and the Communists were aware of its gravity. However, each side saw the problems connected with the deported Czechoslovaks slightly differently. The democrats saw with some fear the sure signs of Czechoslovakia being incorporated into the

Soviet Union and the growing power of the Czechoslovak Communists. While acknowledging the wartime sacrifice of the Soviet Union and the efforts of the Soviet people, while admiring Russian culture, there were unmistakeable reservations regarding the Soviet regime which went as far as strong disagreement. For people thinking along these lines the deportation of Czechoslovak civilians was a manifestation of Communist will and even those who did not see the situation in such strong terms considered it their moral duty to get the deported citizens home again as quickly as possible. The Communists on the other hand did not care about the deportations themselves, as these were in accord with their own political thinking. Many of them could also be of the opinion that the Soviet Union appreciated access to another labor force for use in the mines and construction sites of the Donbas, beyond the Arctic Circle and in the Caucasus, and that the punishment of undesirable elements, primarily Nazi collaborators, should be left to the most competent—the Soviets. The situation, however, was two-edged. Public opinion, especially in Slovakia, began to be more and more disquieted by the fact that the deported Slovaks had not returned, and this criticism was beginning to be directed not only against the government but also against the Communists.

Eventually, in February 1946, State Secretary Vladimír Clementis turned to Ambassador Zorin with a personal letter.³⁰³ In his introduction, Clementis referred to the fact that during recent conversations with Zorin he had given several warnings of the difficult situation which arose from the fact that the soldiers of the Slovak Army and civilians whom the Germans and Hungarians had set to fortification work and who had been captured had still not returned from captivity. Instead, they found themselves in very difficult conditions, being used in the Soviet Union for heavy physical labor in the mines and elsewhere. Several thousand Czechoslovak citizens of Slovak ethnicity who had been captured by the Red Army and carried off to the USSR were in a similar situation. Clementis reminded Zorin that this was having a negative influence on public opinion in Slovakia as their liberation had been promised in the summer of the previous year. He pointed out that Romanian and Hungarian prisoners of war, citizens of the satellites of Hitler's Germany, had already returned to their homeland. Clementis also wrote that some (or even all) of the citizens of German ethnicity apprehended by the Red Army had returned to some regions in Slovakia, but that not even one of the Slovaks apprehended at the same time had returned. That had happened, for example, in the district of Stará Ľubovňa. In the case of apprehended and deported civilians, Clementis advised Zorin that they included many who were

from the point of view of ethnicity and politics completely reliable; in a number of cases they had fought in partisan divisions or were in the underground anti-Fascist movement and had been apprehended on the basis of unfounded denunciations, or informed against for jealous or completely dishonorable reasons which had been discovered and investigated long ago. Clementis wrote to Zorin that the situation affected several thousand families in Slovakia and was plainly influencing the mood of the country. He added that it could be misused for anti-governmental propaganda, which tried to show that the government was incapable of bringing their pleas for the release of family members to the attention of the competent Soviet authorities. In conclusion Clementis again underlined what a difficult position it was for the Czechoslovak authorities and the government itself vis-à-vis the Slovak public. He reminded Deputy of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs Vyshinsky that he (Vyshinsky) had already substantially expressed agreement with the standpoint of the Czechoslovak government and in particular with the fact that the two categories of Czechoslovak internees (the prisoners of war and the deported civilians) should be freed or handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities, and that he had promised a final and specific solution of this question in the course of a few days. Clementis went on to say that in spite of all their efforts, the difficult situation with its unwelcome consequences was still going on. He therefore turned to Zorin with the urgent request that he use his knowledge of conditions in Czechoslovakia and explain to the competent Soviet organs how serious this issue was for the Czechoslovak government, and that he use his authority to fulfill this reasonable and very urgent request of the Czechoslovaks for an early and satisfactory solution to this matter. Clementis even gave as examples two letters—apparently chosen at random—from the huge number of requests for the repatriation of family members. We do not know how Zorin dealt with this urgent memorandum from Clementis. Correctly, he should have passed it on immediately to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in Moscow; however, I have not yet found any reference or mention of it in the archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁰⁴

The Intervention of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Moscow

Ambassador Horák made a chronological list of his interventions with the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs on the back of one of his documents. The first took place on 8 August 1945, when he handed over a note concerning the prisoners of war then in Romania and Hungary. On 12

September 1945 he went there repeatedly to discuss the prisoners of war in Hungary; on 24 September 1945 he intervened for the release of detained Czechoslovak citizens referring to the treaty of 8 May 1944 and the same day intervened especially for the prisoners of war. In the course of September Counselor Hnízdo intervened with Vyshinsky, on the basis of § 7 of this treaty for the deported and for the prisoners of war. Horák's notes continued: 26 September 1945: intervention with Pavlov (head of the 4th European Department); J. Kašpárek: prisoners of war and detained; 12 November 1945: intervention with Vyshinsky; J. Horák: prisoners of war and detained; beginning of December: intervention with Molotov; J. Horák: list of prisoners of war and apprehended; 8 December 1945: intervention with Vyshinsky; J. Horák: prisoners of war and apprehended; 29 December 1945: Molotov; 26 January 1946: Dekanozov; 13 February 1946: Dekanozov, prisoners of war—Szeged; 22 February 1946: note, requested list of released and handing over of 513 prisoners. Horák also noted the dates on which he pleaded with Pavlov personally: 11 October 1945, 9 November 1945, 29 November 1945, 27 December 1945, 25 February 1946.³⁰⁵

We see from Horák's documentation that the repatriation of deported civilians and prisoners of war was one of his priorities. In his case, we do not come across any selective approach based on the nationalist principle clearly apparent elsewhere. It is possible that family members thought that the government was not taking care of its citizens deported to the Soviet Union and that it was not doing anything to save them. One comes across this opinion even now. I think this is not the whole truth. Diplomats tried their best and were as assertive as one could wish, but in the context of Stalin's engineering, of the increasing influence of the Communists in Czechoslovakia and of the very difficult postwar situation, this endeavor could not operate fast enough or achieve satisfactory results.

It was probably during this time that Jiří Horák worked on a several-page analysis on the repatriation of Czechoslovak prisoners of war and Czechoslovak citizens held in the USSR. This survives in Horák's handwritten draft, undated but with a reference number. A document with this number was undoubtedly sent to the ministry.³⁰⁶ From the action points we see that it was drafted in 1946, and because it uses the name "Narkomindel," it must have been written before March, as in March 1946 the name of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (Narodny kommissariat inostrannykh del, NKID, or Narkomindel) was changed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerstvo inostrannykh del, MID). Horák notifies the ministry that "in the matter of the repatriation of prisoners of

war and Czechoslovak citizens held in the USSR interventions were continually made with Narkomindel, as well as directly with the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V.M. Molotov, and his deputies, Vyshinsky and Dekanozov.”

For information, Horák attached the list of memoranda and notes given to Narkomindel as well as the list of his personal interventions with Molotov, Vyshinsky and Dekanozov, and the interventions of the envoy Hnízdo with the head of the 4th European Department, Pavlov. Horák wrote that:

All the responsible Soviet officials take a positive standpoint in this matter and promise they will intervene in the appropriate places on behalf of our detained citizens and prisoners of war and do what they can for them to be released at the earliest opportunity.

To make it easier to ascertain the interned Czechoslovak citizens, Narkomindel asked for lists of their names. The embassy handed this over on 29 November and on 3 December 1945 the head of the office gave a copy personally to the People's Commissar Molotov... From that time the undersigned, head of mission, personally pleaded several times with Molotov, Vyshinsky and Dekanozov for a settlement. Finally on 20 [unclear, author's note] January 1946 the NKID gave the ambassador a note saying that our data concerning the number of internees were considerably overestimated. According to this note 482 Czechoslovak citizens had been repatriated from the camps for internees, 239 should now be on the way home and 513 were held to be tried by the Soviet courts.

In order to ascertain which internees were repatriated and which until now held in the USSR, on 22 February 1946 the embassy requested from the NKID lists of all the Czechoslovak citizens liberated from the camps and repatriated, likewise lists of the 513 citizens held by the Soviet authorities. At the same time the embassy asked that those 513 citizens, as agreed in § 7 of the treaty of 8 May 1944, should not be subjected to Soviet justice but handed over to the Czechoslovak courts which would sentence them according to Czechoslovak justice.

The embassy used this opportunity to advise the NKID that the embassy of the USSR in Prague is informed about every apprehension and sentencing of a Soviet citizen in the Czechoslovak Republic and to request that the NKID also inform the office here about each case of detention and sentencing of a Czechoslovak citizen in the USSR. Narkomindel has not yet replied to this memorandum.

In the course of a personal visit, the chief of the 4th Department conveyed to envoy Hnízdo that according to his information 35,820 Czechoslovak prisoners of war were repatriated from the USSR from August to the end of November 1945 and there were still 10,000 remaining. These, however, could not properly demonstrate that they were Czechoslovak nationals, and the Soviet authorities were therefore still holding them here since they were apparently suspicious that they were Germans or Austrians who pretended to be Czechoslovak nationals in order to get out of the camps and win their freedom.

As proposed by envoy Hnízdo, we are willing to send our representative to the camps to ascertain on the spot whether ... [text unclear—author's note], that it would

be very difficult and impracticable inasmuch as the prisoners are apparently scattered in small groups across the whole of the USSR. In the course of this he mentioned that he was communicating the above-mentioned number for the moment privately insofar as it has not been confirmed anywhere and he therefore requests that the embassy does not refer to it until we receive it in a written report.

From another conversation, it was clear that the Soviet government would not allow an official of another state to visit the prison or internment camps in the USSR and check the detained.

In the course of a conversation about how such a big difference between our number of detained and theirs might have originated, Pavlov noted that many of the internees perhaps from various reasons hid behind foreign names and therefore it was not possible to ascertain them, and also that perhaps some of them had died.

The embassy had already several times requested news about the fates of individuals detained in Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Army or the NKVD with a reference to the fact that the Soviet authorities must have their exact list and must also know where they could be found. However, the NKID always reacted very evasively to this request.

On the basis of MZV³⁰⁷ no... of ... the embassy will put before the NKID in the coming days a new list of the apprehended and the undersigned chief of the office will intervene personally with Molotov or Vyshinsky in the matter of repatriation.

In spite of all the problems, repatriation did take place, even though it was more than difficult to certify the data available. The repatriation of prisoners of war crowded out the repatriation of abducted civilians, which stagnated, even though that was the category which was a priority for the Czechoslovak government. Many of the prisoners of war were Hungarians, in whom the Czechoslovak government had no great interest, trying to move them on to Hungary; or Germans, in whose repatriation it had absolutely no interest; or soldiers and officers of the Slovak Army who were branded with the fact that they had fought on the German side against the Soviet Union. Those in official positions who called for the immediate repatriation of everyone without regard to ethnicity went on the defensive, and those who maintained that Czechoslovakia did not want Germans and Hungarians carried greater weight.

On 5 March 1946 the Foreign Ministry in Prague asked Horák to immediately send back a report about how the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens was proceeding. It was interested in both the main categories: civilians apprehended by the Red Army and carried off to work in the Soviet Union, and those who were captured as soldiers in the Slovak or Hungarian Army. From the ministerial memorandum it emerges that the fact that civilians were deported dozens at a time from various localities was known,³⁰⁸ and that one place where many Slovaks were held was the Donets Basin, where several thousand worked in the coal mines. The definition of prisoner of war is interesting—they are understood to be

those who “were forced to serve” in the Slovak or Hungarian Army. The embassy received an instruction that they should “question in the relevant Soviet quarters by what method and how soon the Soviet government intended to settle the question of their repatriation.”

The Soviet side made no great effort to answer these questions. They had no problems in promising an early solution and at the same time querying the Czechoslovak data and repeatedly requiring them to be checked, or asking for new, updated and more precise data. The ministry naturally knew this from regular reports and from information Ambassador Horák sent to headquarters. However, whenever Horák received an official instruction signed “on behalf of the minister,” he could again put a log on the fire.

On 18 March 1946 Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk telegraphed Horák to say that the Ministry of National Defense had received a report that in the next few days 5,000 freed persons from the Soviet prison camps would be handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities in Chop, on the border of Slovakia and the Soviet Union. This information should have come from General Basilov, Soviet plenipotentiary for repatriation, and have reached Prague through the Czechoslovak military mission in Moscow. Horák, however, knew nothing about it and when on 22 March he went to the NKID to ask Pavlov about it, he learned nothing. Even a month later on 18 April, Pavlov was unable to answer Horák specifically and maintained that he knew nothing about the matter, which answer Horák immediately sent to Prague. It was important to know whether these were prisoners of war or deported civilians—however, as much as he tried he was unable to obtain an answer from the Soviets.³⁰⁹

Horák's Intervention with Vyshinsky, 21 March 1946

Ambassador Horák must often have felt that he was turning in a vicious circle and that things simply were not moving forward. He was eventually received on 21 March 1946 by Andrey Vyshinsky, deputy minister of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Horák again urged that a solution should be found concerning the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens. He recapitulated to Vyshinsky all the steps taken in the case: three notes and a detailed memorandum already sent to the Soviet side, on top of seven more personal interventions of the ambassador. Horák then emphasized the difficulties which were arising for the Czechoslovak government. Vyshinsky replied by repeating the same numbers Horák had heard from him many times before—according to the Soviets there were only 513

persons on the territory of the USSR, and those were persons whom the Soviet Union insisted would be charged before a court. Horák objected that the Czechoslovak government was constantly receiving new lists of interned Czechoslovak citizens, and “pleaded with the Soviet Union to resolve the whole matter by a radical and generous method, that is, to release all the interned Czechoslovaks.”

He insisted that whoever had transgressed, in whatever way, would answer for it in a Czechoslovak court. Vyshinsky’s reaction was to evade the question, saying that it was almost impossible to ascertain where these people were living, scattered as they were across the enormous territory of the USSR. Horák, however, had a strong argument on his side which he immediately put to use—he said that according to Czechoslovak information there were several hundred interned Czechoslovak citizens in camps nos. 234–240 in Stalino in Donbas. The conversation was clearly not pleasant and Horák left with a disappointing and unsatisfactory outcome—Vyshinsky had said that “he would look into the matter further and would let us know, and as far as a radical solution was concerned, it would only be possible to decide the matter after an agreement with the relevant authorities.”

It is no wonder that Horák was not satisfied with the direction in which the negotiations had developed. This aside, Vyshinsky was known for his arrogant behavior, recorded in many sources and memoirs. Not everyone, however, saw him in this light—for example, Miloš Krno, a Czechoslovak Communist diplomat in Moscow recalled opulent diplomatic receptions in Moscow where “in the company of good friends we stayed on late, sometimes into the early hours.” He remembers Andrey Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky with fellow feeling as the epitome of wit.³¹⁰

Evidence that Horák was disturbed by his meeting with Vyshinsky appears in his report, where he wrote that: “I consider the strenuous investigation of this matter to be one of the most important tasks of our embassy.”³¹¹

***The Material Summarized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
19 April 1946***

In the meantime, in April 1946, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague started to process the primary material about detained and imprisoned Czechoslovak citizens and their release from camps in the USSR. Up to that time, the two sides had only exchanged numbers and been unable to reach any agreement. The Czechoslovak side exercised its strong argu-

ment, § 7 of the treaty and the first lists of names appeared in applications to the Soviets. It seemed, however, that the process of repatriation was going to take much longer and the negotiations be far more demanding, which led the Czechoslovaks to start working on this issue more systematically. This aside, it was already clear that the Soviet Union was not going to release the interned Czechoslovak citizens en bloc, as had been requested by the Czechoslovak diplomats. In addition, the Soviet Union was not willing to compile a list of deported Czechoslovak citizens and hand them back to Czechoslovakia; on the contrary, the negotiations were going to be very complicated and long-drawn out. The Soviet argument—against which it was difficult for Czechoslovakia to raise objections—was extremely unwelcome: that it was not in the power of the Soviet Union to register the interned Czechoslovaks because they were spread around the vast expanse of the Soviet Union. It appeared that Czechoslovakia must present lists of its deported citizens itself. This absurd requirement, placed by the Soviet Union immediately after the start of negotiations as a *conditio sine qua non* of any further negotiations, thus established itself as a cornerstone of the later selective approach to repatriation implemented mid-1947.

Some Czechoslovak citizens really had found themselves in camps in the furthest corners of the USSR. Most of them, however, were kept in a few localities where their concentration was quite dense. There were also the camps' own records, classified according to ethnicity. The Soviet side simply denied the existence of these and did not show the slightest inclination to release the internees until it had come to its own decision. No persuasive argumentation on the part of the Czechoslovak diplomats could change the Soviet Union's mind. However, Soviet intransigence in 1946 led to the Czechoslovak authorities embarking on a systematic registering of all deported citizens. It was the only way to move the situation forward, because waiting for a constructive approach from the Soviets which would lead to the release of the internees proved impossible.

In 1946 the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens was the subject of intensive negotiations for Czechoslovak institutions. The Ministry of National Defense was flooded with intercessions and requests mainly from Slovakia, asking that steps be taken which would persuade the government of the USSR to release Czechoslovak soldiers, for the most part Slovaks, who were held in the Soviet Union. There were numerous requests for intervention on behalf of men who had in 1939 found themselves on the territory of the USSR and been sentenced to forced labor camps. The only chance to be released from the Gulag appeared when the 1st Czecho-

slovak Army Corps in the USSR was formed in Buzuluk starting in early 1942. Those who for various reasons had not joined the Czechoslovak armed forces remained in the Gulag. The Ministry of National Defense was further responsible for a number of requests for the repatriation of those soldiers from General Svoboda's army who had been wounded and were in infirmaries in the Soviet Union.

The Ministry of National Defense tried approaching the Soviet authorities through the Czechoslovak Military Mission in the USSR, but its efforts were largely fruitless. In spring 1946 it eventually presented this matter to the government, proposing that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with authorization from the government, should ask the government of the Soviet Union to issue a directive. This directive should order all Soviet commanders to send everyone of Czech and Slovak ethnicity to a particular camp from which they would then be repatriated as a group. All attempts to implement this complex solution were, however, condemned to failure, because the Soviets were willing to act only in individual cases where the Czechoslovak side could provide "an exact address in the USSR."

On 19 April 1946 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague prepared an overview with the reference no. 60.429/II-1/46 for the Ministry of National Defense. In this it reacted to the Ministry of National Defense's proposal for a governmental resolution concerning the release of Czechoslovaks detained and imprisoned in the camps in the USSR. This document shows that the Czechoslovak side managed to create a system of categorization to apply to deportees and wartime captives. The Foreign Ministry divided the "Czechoslovak citizens who find themselves involuntarily on the territory of the USSR or in POW and labor camps under Soviet administration" into three categories:

1. Prisoners of war or persons considered by the Soviet authorities to be so
2. Civilians of Slovak and Czech ethnicity detained on Czechoslovak territory by organs of the Red Army or the NKVD
3. Members of Czechoslovak military units in the USSR held in Soviet infirmaries

The Foreign Ministry expected the Soviet authorities to approach the request for repatriation according to these criteria and therefore urged that interventions should preferably be classified into these categories. There was, however, no certainty of this; the Soviet authorities never officially referred to these categories, and the Foreign Ministry more or less reasoned them out from the context. The reality was far from being so trans-

parent and legible. The Soviet authorities did make a formal distinction between the internees and the prisoners of war, but when it came to actual practice the fates of prisoners of war and of civilian deportees were so very different. This aside, we can see from a lot of the evidence that the repatriation of prisoners of war was at various times simpler and smoother than organizing the repatriation of a person deported from some Slovak village or hamlet.

We will take a more detailed look at the first two groups. Prisoners of war or persons judged by the Soviet authorities to be so were predominantly members of the former Slovak Army, dispatched during the war to the territory of the USSR or one of its satellites, and soldiers of the Hungarian and German armies. In the case of the German Army it was often, as mentioned in the document, a case of the sons of mixed marriages or of inhabitants from the regions of Hlučín, Kravaře and Opava, who in spite of their Czech ethnicity were declared to be *Reichsdeutsche* and had to enlist in the German Army. The ministry included in this group a small group of Slovaks whom the Germans deported from central Slovakia to strengthen the work force in Hungary. Here they were taken captive by the Soviet military and transported mainly to the Donbas region. The Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry writes that Ambassador Horák made numerous interventions concerning this group in particular and was repeatedly assured by the Soviet authorities that their repatriation would be speeded up and that some of this group had returned home already. The Ministry of National Defense mentioned in an additional note that among the interned there were also Czechoslovaks who were on the territory of the USSR in 1939 and who did not join the Czechoslovak troops in the USSR.

The second group was characterized by the Foreign Ministry as civilians detained by the Red Army and the NKVD on Czechoslovak territory during the liberation. The paper mentioned that they included members of the Hlinka Guard, but that in a number of cases it was a question of politically uncommitted persons, and even members of the Slovak National Uprising and those who had done good service in the Czechoslovak resistance.

This was one of the first occasions on which the Foreign Ministry attempted to classify and put in order the mass of requests for intervention on behalf of family members interned in the USSR. Henceforth all the analyses of Czechoslovak origin kept to this basic scheme. Its authors faithfully and transparently divided the individual categories; but even so, they were unable to penetrate more deeply into issues concerning the deported civilians.

The analysis of the Foreign Ministry may have sounded relatively optimistic—it quoted a note of 27 August 1945 from the Soviet embassy in Prague which promised the release of 30,000 men from Soviet internment camps and stated that most of the prisoners of war had already been released. The snag in this, however, was that the repatriation had been carried out from camps outside the territory of the USSR, chiefly from Auschwitz (Oświęcim) and Ratibor (Racibórz), not from camps in the Soviet Union. Not all of those who fell into Soviet hands as prisoners of war were deported to the interior of the USSR. Many thousands were interned in camps on territory occupied by the Red Army and were eventually released. It is clear that the Soviet Union did not have the capacity to deport all these captives to the interior of the country, and in addition, such a gigantic deportation would possibly have evoked a negative reaction internationally. For the Soviet Union it was much easier to manage the shift of its own civilian population, the deportation of certain limited groups, and the holding of prisoners of war captured on the territory of the USSR. It was not easy to repatriate people even in this case, especially when the Czechoslovak government displayed a tentative fear that it might encourage the Czechoslovak public to hold a critical attitude toward the Soviet Union, and in some cases evoke the displeasure of the Soviets by “exaggerated interventions.”

This position could be recognized most clearly in the case of deported Czechoslovak civilians. The Foreign Ministry correctly noted that there were members of the Hlinka organizations among the deported civilians; but there were also people without political affiliation, and those who had actively participated in the Slovak National Uprising or provided valuable assistance to the Czechoslovak resistance. Intervention on their behalf was carried out on the basis of lists of the deported, or individually. The Foreign Ministry, however, wrote to the Ministry of National Defense that it feared that too frequent interventions would weaken its effectiveness. This formulation is in conflict with what the Foreign Ministry insisted on elsewhere—that according to § 7 of the treaty of 8 May 1944, all Czechoslovak citizens came under Czechoslovak jurisdiction and that therefore all of them without exception had to be repatriated, whether they were collaborators with the Nazi regime or whoever they were, and their cases had to be judged by the Czechoslovak courts. We learn from the Foreign Ministry’s memorandum that on the contrary, some cases were more urgent and important than others. This made a difference when carrying out individual interventions. Research into the activities of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow in the matter of repatriation shows that the diplomats

there were intensively involved in repatriation and intervened for all the names they received. In Prague, however, an attitude had gradually begun to emerge which, a year later, made it possible for a selective approach toward repatriation to be implemented. I believe that the fears that too frequent interventions might weaken their effectiveness were superfluous. Such delicate diplomatic considerations played no part whatsoever in negotiations with the Soviets, and neither did suggestions that the long-drawn-out process of repatriation was creating difficulties for the Czechoslovak government. That scarcely bothered the Soviets at all.

The Foreign Ministry made the most recent Soviet information available to the Ministry of National Defense—always the same numbers we have come across already. Up to 30 January 1946 there were said to be 750 persons of Czech and Slovak ethnicity in Soviet internment camps, of which 237 were to be repatriated in the near future and the remainder—the larger part, 513 persons—were to be tried by the Soviet courts for activity hostile to the USSR. The view of the Foreign Ministry was that these probably concerned activities to which the treaty of 8 May 1944 did not relate. This note likewise indicates that the Foreign Ministry was halfway to stepping down from unconditional requests for the repatriation of all Czechoslovak citizens without exception. In the end the Foreign Ministry sent information that the Office of the Commissioner of the Interior in Slovakia was required to draw up a new list of the deported and of persons who had not yet been returned up to 25 March 1946. This would enable new interventions to be carried out on the basis of the most recent Czechoslovak information—these interventions were to take place in parallel through the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow and the Soviet embassy in Prague.

One category of persons for repatriation remained; it was, however, of a different nature. It concerned members of Czechoslovak military troops in the USSR, who had been wounded and were being cared for in Soviet infirmaries. The Foreign Ministry did not anticipate any problems in their repatriation, and therefore left the matter to be organized by the Czechoslovak Military Attaché in Moscow. It later transpired that this category was much more complicated than that. There were the wives and children of these soldiers to be taken into account. Negotiations over their repatriation dragged on for a long time.³¹²

Uncertainties about Information Received from Envoy Chichaev

Around 20 May 1946, Chichaev, the Soviet envoy in Prague, made an official visit to Dr. Vladimír Outrata at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and mentioned that there would be a transport of 1,500 Czechoslovak citizens in the near future. This information caused immediate disturbance and speculation in Czechoslovak institutions with an interest in the matter. No one knew exactly what sort of transport it was. The most optimistic thought that this transport could mean the return of all the Czechoslovak citizens en bloc—the most recent lists of missing persons from the Slovak authorities totaled 1,200 names. Another idea emerged that it could refer to a part of the gradual release of the 30,000 prisoners of war whose repatriation had already taken place. This action was also discussed in Soviet notes. This sort of approach was typical of Soviet diplomacy. By using information whose essence was difficult to penetrate or authenticate, and which nevertheless could not be ignored, the Soviet side obscured the facts and complicated negotiations. This sort of vague information was repeatedly presented and then quoted without being linked to any specific facts. In the end the Foreign Ministry, in an effort to throw some light on the matter, suggested to Ambassador Horák in Moscow that he should ascertain what action Chichaev actually had in mind. This time, however, the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry had no fears that too frequent interventions could spoil the course of repatriation. On the contrary—the ministry now suggested that there should be no delay in intervening for both individuals and groups, so that the Soviet side would understand that the matter was immeasurably important for Czechoslovakia.³¹³

As the days passed, the situation did not become much clearer. Horák had to visit the head of the 4th European Department of the MID, Pavlov, several times about the matter. In the end, he learned that maybe as early as 5 June, internees had been handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities in Sighet. On 11 June Pavlov told Horák that on the preceding day (10 June) 1,200 Czechoslovak prisoners of war and internees had been handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities in Chop. According to Pavlov, the exact number could not be ascertained and the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry could not be informed because the repatriation was already in progress.³¹⁴

We can imagine how such an approach must have complicated things on the Czechoslovak side. It is no wonder that Czechoslovak diplomats repeatedly complained that the Soviet side never kept them informed. It was impossible for Horák to authenticate the information he had received,

and the Soviet side could always argue that all the internees had already been released and that there were no more civilians interned in the Soviet camps. No competent authority of the Czechoslovaks—not even the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—had been informed by the Czechoslovak officials in Chop where (according to Pavlov) the internees and prisoners of war should have been handed over, that such a large number really had been repatriated. One can assume that the Czechoslovak authorities in Chop would follow the case; they knew its importance and would certainly have sent some report about the unannounced arrival of this transport. But they had not done so, and so the casual word Envoy Chichaevev let slip to Vladimír Outrata was essentially the only information the Soviets provided. The Czechoslovak side, however, lost the basis of its argument, because the information it had prepared about missing persons still held in Soviet camps lost its credibility with the Soviets.

The whole matter was explained a month later. It appeared that around mid-June a transport of Czechoslovak citizens really had arrived in Chop, on the border of the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities allowed them to cross the border without any hand-over to the Czechoslovak authorities. Obviously, these persons immediately made for their own homes and not even their names could be ascertained, or the total number. When State Secretary Vladimír Clementis at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote of this to Horák in Moscow, he referred to an approximate total of 1,400. This attitude of the Soviets to the Czechoslovaks was galling, because apart from anything else it completely undermined the fundamental Czechoslovak argument—that those who had transgressed would be tried in the Czechoslovak courts. This meant the deportation of those who had collaborated with Hitler's regime had taken place unlawfully. Clementis complained to Horák that the unmethodical release across the border made it impossible for the Czechoslovak border guards to check the repatriates and, where necessary, detain those against whom criminal proceedings should be taken. It is difficult to imagine how the Czechoslovak officials could have identified those persons on the border in the course of a hand-over from the Soviets and it is very likely that this screening would have carried with it many injustices. However, the substance of Clementis's dissatisfaction lay in the announcement that:

among the repatriated are many Germans and Hungarians, apparently the result of the fact that the commanders of individual barracks in the internment camps, generally Germans, were responsible for choosing the Czechoslovak citizens for repatriation and in so doing favored their own compatriots.

What mattered most to the Czechoslovak establishment was the possibility that among those returned to Czechoslovakia were some in whom the state had no interest, on the contrary, it wanted to get rid of them. Most of these repatriates were probably prisoners of war from the German and Hungarian armies who were as a rule refused entry on the grounds that, in the case of the Germans, their families had probably already been deported to Germany. In the case of the Hungarians, a clear effort was made to repatriate only those Hungarians who had decided to “re-Slovakize” themselves.

The fact that we find further information on the great June repatriation in this report from Horák is important for us at this moment.

“The Great June Repatriation”

It was not until later, in a report of 18 October, that Horák could give more exact information about the “Great June Repatriation.” It may have been around this time that he wrote about the MID’s note of 26 July 1946, which, however, cannot be traced in the archives. Horák quoted it, saying that according to Soviet information 2,500 internees were to be handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities in May and June. According to the same Soviet source, the lists of repatriated persons were to be handed to the representatives of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior named in the note—Lieutenant Lisica and Sergeant Gregor. Insofar as the repatriation really took place as the Soviet note insists, it would have been one of the largest repatriations of Czechoslovaks ever. Such a thing could not have taken place without those who negotiated repatriation and who needed the updated information being informed—that is, without informing the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague and the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. They, however, knew nothing about it. Neither the MID nor any other Soviet authority informed the Czechoslovak side about this repatriation and the Czechoslovak officers on the borders were presented with a *fait accompli*. It was not until 19 October that Horák urgently tried to obtain the lists of the repatriated from the Ministry of the Interior, so that the embassy could bring its documentation up to date.³¹⁵ Horák returned again to this note from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a telegram sent to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry on 22 October 1946. He repeated that according to this note, 2,500 internees were released in the course of May and June and that it happened as a consequence of the intervention of the “state secretary and our embassy here.” Horák repeatedly asked the Ministry of the Interior and the Minis-

try of Defense for revised lists of those who were detained up to then. To that he had the answer from the Slovak Office of the Commissioner of the Interior that those released had dispersed to their homes and that there was no way to put any list together.³¹⁶

It would seem that the Soviet side never handed over any lists to the Czechoslovak authorities even on this occasion. If lists really had been given to the Ministry of the Interior, the above-mentioned officers of the Ministry of the Interior would have passed them on to the appropriate authority, and Horák in Moscow would certainly have received a copy.

The question still arises as to why it was October before Horák replied to the note of 26 July, and why he waited to the end of July to pass on information about the repatriation of 10 June. It would appear from the context that prior to October Horák did not know the content of the note—if he had had this note at his disposition he would certainly have formulated his questions as to the June repatriation differently. He would have used the facts given in the note and referred to it. He would also have had to notify the ministry about the note. Everything points to the fact that this note was not given to the Czechoslovak diplomats at the time it was dated, but much later.

Czechoslovak–Hungarian Relationship and Repatriation

The Czechoslovak–Hungarian issue dragged on all through the repatriation. On 20 August 1947 a memorandum was handed to Ambassador Zorin in Prague about the fact that during the repatriation of Hungarian detainees to Hungary some people were left out of the transports if they claimed that they were of Slovak ethnicity and wanted to move to Czechoslovakia, or that their families in Hungary had applied to be moved. Fears then spread that the chances of repatriation from the USSR of the relatives of someone who had applied to be moved from Hungary to Czechoslovakia were threatened. These fears were apparently exploited by the Hungarians against the act of resettlement, an activity which acquired a bad name among Czechoslovaks living in Hungary and can be described as a failure and loss of trust.³¹⁷

It was in this connection that the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs called to mind the note handed to the Soviet side in March 1946, in which it had tried to get prisoners of war—Hungarian citizens of Slovak ethnicity—repatriated so that they could be incorporated into the exchange of inhabitants with Hungary. The Soviet Union's reaction at that time was that this related to an issue between the USSR and Hungary, that

Czechoslovakia had no business to intervene on behalf of members of foreign states, and that these prisoners of war would be treated in the same way as other Hungarian prisoners of war, even if they were of Czechoslovak ethnicity. However, the Czechoslovaks now pointed out that, during the repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war, those who were of Slovak ethnicity and said they had decided to live in Czechoslovakia, or who held that someone from their family in Hungary intended to relocate to Czechoslovakia, were turned away from the transports. This meant that they had to remain in the USSR because they could not return to Czechoslovakia for resettlement, nor could they go to Hungary, and had no way of choosing whether to return to Hungary or go to Czechoslovakia. It would thus appear, says the note, that Soviet officials have an order to repatriate only Hungarians. These facts had a very unfortunate influence on the attitude of the Czechoslovak minority in Hungary to an exchange of inhabitants, and on the morale of persons who had intended to move to Czechoslovakia and who had family members who were (because they were citizens of Hungary) in captivity in the Soviet Union. It seems there were even cases where Slovak candidates for resettlement living in Hungary went back on their intention to move to Czechoslovakia because they were afraid that if they moved, their relations would not be repatriated from the Soviet Union in the foreseeable future. The memorandum quoted a specific case, when a prisoner of war called Jan Daniš, whose address was given as the USSR, was thrown off a transport when he said that his family had applied to be relocated to Czechoslovakia and that he considered himself to be a Czechoslovak citizen. The Czechoslovak side therefore felt it was essential for Soviet officials to be given a directive that persons of Czech or Slovak ethnicity, or those whose families in Hungary had decided to move to Czechoslovakia, should not be turned off the transports.³¹⁸

The Czechoslovak standpoint was emphasized repeatedly—that all persons of Czech and Slovak nationality detained by the Red Army be repatriated. A list of persons to be repatriated was requested prior to the repatriation. Zorin could only say that he would intervene in the matter.

Based on a suggestion from Prague, Ambassador Horák made a parallel intervention in Moscow on 16 July. He then informed his Foreign Ministry that Vyshinsky had fully recognized the Czechoslovak standpoint and promised that strict instructions would be issued for Czechoslovak officials to be informed about the transports in advance.³¹⁹ Vyshinsky assured Horák that the Soviet government wanted the issue of the internees to be settled as soon as possible—a diplomatic phrase that did not

reveal the Soviet Union's real intentions. What the Soviets really wanted was to leave the interned to work in the camps for as long as they possibly could, i.e., until they were utterly exhausted.³²⁰

On 14 February 1948 Lavrishchev, an officer of the 4th European Department of the MID, prepared for Vyshinsky a summary of the most recent developments in Czechoslovak–Hungarian relationships, with chief regard to the exchange of inhabitants. He focused mainly on the period from the signing of the treaty of 27 February 1946. Lavrishchev states that during 1946 hardly any exchanges had been carried out, and that Prime Minister Gottwald had on 11 July 1947, during his trip to Moscow, handed a *pamyatnaya zapiska* (memorandum) on the matter to Molotov and had tried to force the Soviet Union to put pressure on the Hungarians. The Soviets said in their reply that it was for Czechoslovakia to come to an agreement with Hungary. However, as Lavrishchev wrote, the Czechoslovak government had turned to the Soviet embassy in Prague concerning Czechoslovak–Hungarian relations. Lavrishchev further noted that in January 1948, Bedřich Geminder (1901–1952), chairman of the International Department of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ) had approached the Hungarian Communists unofficially, telling them that the ÚV KSČ had decided to change its attitude concerning the issue of the Hungarians in Slovakia. Bearing in mind the forthcoming elections, the Hungarian problem would not be opened. Hungarians in Slovakia would be promised various advantages and the ÚV KSČ had decided to step down from the resettlement of the Hungarians, with which the Hungarians might be satisfied. It appeared that Viliam Široký (chairman of the Communist Party of Slovakia), during his visit to Budapest in January 1948, had urged that the exchanges should be carried out according to the previously mentioned agreements, and it was decided that once the exchanges had been finished, the matter would be closed.³²¹

Czechoslovakia's attempt to get rid of the Hungarians on its territory was persistent. It became a political platform shared by the Beneš establishment (affected by the Munich syndrome) and by the Communists, who saw political advantages in adopting this position. The Czechoslovak Communists had hoped that they would be able to win the full support of the Soviet Union for their plan to deport the Hungarians from Czechoslovakia. In the case of the deportation of the Germans, the Soviet Union supported the Czechoslovak politicians—both the establishment headed by Beneš and the Communists. In the case of the Hungarians, however, no support was granted even to the Czechoslovak Communists. The Soviet Union, in its reluctance to support Czechoslovak aims, fulfilled its own

aim—for Czechoslovakia and Hungary to come to an agreement on how to proceed with the issue of ethnicity. This was an agreement between the Czechoslovak and Hungarian Communists, which more or less moved in the direction the Soviets wanted—toward building a bloc of fraternal states under the Soviet sphere of influence. These political steps were demonstrated in the course of repatriating Czechoslovak citizens of Hungarian origin, whether prisoners of war or deported civilians.

Ambassador Horák Urges a Final Solution to the Repatriation

On 18 October 1946, Ambassador Horák visited Dekanozov to urge yet again a solution for the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens interned in the Soviet Union. To emphasize the urgency of the situation he decided to tell him what he himself had learned from a recent visit to Slovakia. He had seen the seriousness of the situation in Slovakia at firsthand and heard the chorus of criticism raised against the Czechoslovak government with regard to its failure in negotiating repatriation. In addition, Horák wanted to remind the Soviets that the issue of repatriation had been substantially negotiated during Prime Minister Klement Gottwald's visit to Moscow in summer 1946, and that nothing stood in the way of all Czechoslovak citizens being repatriated. Horák informed the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry the next day about his visit to Dekanozov but did not say how the Soviet diplomat had reacted to the ambassador's arguments.³²²

In comparison, the Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Nagy likewise raised the repatriation of the deported during his visit to Moscow in April 1946; however, the Soviet representatives only referred to the fact that they would all return home after a peace treaty had been signed, or responded with uncertain formulations. The repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war was factored into the peace treaty in that their return would be the subject of an agreement between Hungary and the relevant power and that all expenses incurred in holding the prisoners of war must be recompensed by the Hungarian government. Hungary then paid the Soviet Union a considerable sum of money, and another to Romania for the use of the Romanian railway by which they were repatriated. The Western powers did not ask for compensation for the costs of repatriation. The Hungarian government never did succeed in closing an agreement with the Soviet Union on the repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war and civilian deportees. The greatest wave of repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war took place from April to November 1948 after the signing of

the Soviet–Hungarian Treaty on Mutual Friendship and Cooperation (February 1948), after which the Soviet government considered the question of these repatriations to be solved.

The Lists and Instructions

The updating of the lists of deportees became a nightmare for the Czechoslovak diplomats in Moscow who repeatedly had to face the same problem: according to the Soviets there were no interned Czechoslovak civilians in Soviet camps apart from those 513 who had committed crimes against the Soviet Union and were now awaiting trial.

A Czechoslovak government delegation had visited Moscow in summer 1946. Repatriation was not the main aim on its agenda. It was the first postwar governmental visit and a much wider spectrum of issues was discussed. The problem of repatriation nevertheless appeared among the recapitulation of problematic issues. Counselor Kašpárek then informed Prague that during negotiations with the 4th European Department of the MID, Pavlov had maintained that there were only those 513 detained and sentenced Czechoslovak citizens in the USSR. The Czechoslovak diplomats understandably objected that there were many more, but Molotov and Vyshinsky asked them to provide lists, with which all argument came to an end. It was plain that the Czechoslovak lists could no longer reflect the most recent state after the unrecorded repatriation in June, and as Kašpárek wrote, knowing the Soviets, it was risky to claim someone who in the meantime had already returned to his homeland.³²³

On 8 August 1946 a telegram reached the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow from Jaromír Kopecký³²⁴ at the Foreign Ministry in Prague, telling Horák that there was a courier on the way with the latest lists. These lists, however, were from the end of May, so they could not reflect the state of repatriation after June. However, as Kopecký wrote to Horák, the lists could in any case never be exact because all the time they were being put together, more people were returning. Nevertheless, the difference was not great. According to Kopecký, apart from the Germans and Hungarians who were listed separately, the lists contained 1,460 Slovak names. There must certainly have been a percentage of prisoners of war but as Kopecký writes, Horák could easily recognize these based on the time and place of detentions given in the lists. The sending of these lists, essentially in a rough form without having been edited by the Foreign Ministry, was clearly the most the ministry could do at that moment, because they were only received in Prague shortly before the departure of the courier. It was

therefore left to the ambassador to use his judgment regarding the lists and deploy them as best he may. Kopecký only pointed out that as well as prisoners of war there were detained civilians on the lists, many of them forced into labor divisions, and, for example, deserters from the Slovak Army who could be considered direct victims of German violence. Horák had to underline these circumstances in the course of his interventions, as well as the fact that in the case of detained civilians, misunderstandings had frequently arisen about persons engaged in the underground movement and the struggle against Nazism. Horák had to maintain that those who, according to the Soviet representatives, should be sentenced for crimes against the Soviet Union, had surely committed only offences covered by § 7 of the treaty, and that there could not be so many of them as the Soviet side claimed. Horák was instructed to intervene immediately for the release of both categories—the prisoners of war and the detained civilians—and at the same time to emphasize that the Slovak public was seriously disturbed by the Soviet Union's announcement that the repatriation of Hungarian and Austrian prisoners of war had been completed, while there were Slovaks who had still not been released.

As soon as the courier arrived in Moscow with the latest lists, Counselor Kašpárek negotiated on their basis with Pavlov. He met him at the latest on 13 August. Under pressure of the latest data Pavlov admitted that there were more detained civilians than the Soviets had claimed but he did not want to accept any another formulation than that "there were not substantially more than five hundred." Pavlov could wriggle out of this tricky situation by a well-tried manoeuvre: he started asking the Czechoslovak side to present new lists, this time divided into prisoners and internees, and to list separately the Germans and Hungarians in whom Czechoslovakia was not interested. It is unfortunately true that the Czechoslovak officials demonstrably tried to repatriate primarily ethnic Slovaks and Czechs, and that in its attempts to get rid of members of "unwelcome" minorities the Czechoslovak government itself prepared the ground for these Soviet manoeuvres. In the end, the effort of the "Soviet" Territorial Department of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry (further on Soviet Department) to equip the embassy with up-to-date lists as quickly as possible did not help to speed up negotiations. This was because the embassy, according to Counselor Kašpárek, did not have enough typists to edit the lists, so they had to be sent back to Prague to be transcribed in the categories requested. Kopecký had foreseen this, for he had actually offered this solution to Horák.³²⁵

Ambassador Horák was at the same time instructed to ask the Soviet Union to inform the Czechoslovaks of every occasion on which a Czecho-

slovak citizen was put on trial, and for the accused to be given an opportunity to provide the necessary material through the embassy. However, as a priority, Horák was to propose that these persons, accused or already sentenced, should be handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities who "would investigate every case with the greatest care." The Czechoslovak side proceeded in this way with the Soviet request put forward by Zorin, that Soviet citizens serving their sentences in Czechoslovak prisons be released for the purpose of repatriation to the USSR.³²⁶ In presenting these requests, Horák should be in touch with the work of the Czechoslovak Delegation for the Liquidation of War Damage of 1946. The Soviet Union did not react to this argument and Czechoslovakia's requests were never addressed.

Spišiak, Čatloš and Co.

In some specific cases the Soviet Union did hand over Czechoslovak citizens to Czechoslovakia for juridical procedures. These were, however, special cases which were in the Soviet interest. An example was the group Spišiak, Čatloš, Turanec and Mičura needed by Czechoslovakia as witnesses in trying the government of the wartime Slovak state, above all Jozef Tiso. Ján Spišiak was an Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Hungary during the war and arrested by SMERSH (Smert' Shpionam, Death to Spies). Viktor Semyonovich Abakumov, head of SMERSH, informed Molotov on 16 November 1945 that on Stalin's instruction of 8 February 1945, the SMERSH representative with the 2nd Ukrainian Front in Budapest had arrested Ján Spišiak and taken him to SMERSH headquarters. Spišiak was to say in the course of interrogation that from the moment the Slovak Republic originated he was an advocate of its independence from Germany and that he likewise strove for its incorporation into Czechoslovakia on the basis of a federation. In the post of ambassador in Budapest he carried out political tasks for President Beneš and the government in exile on Beneš's instructions. He said it was on Beneš's instructions that he had stayed in Budapest after the entry of the Red Army and counted on being the envoy of a new, postwar Czechoslovak government. Abakumov was informed by Dekanozov from the MID that the Czechoslovak government wanted Spišiak and asked for new instructions concerning him.³²⁷

Ferdinand Čatloš (1895–1972), a general and minister of National Defense, and Jozef Turanec (1892–1957), a general and commander of the Army of the Slovak Republic, were both arrested during the Slovak Na-

tional Uprising and deported to Moscow. Martin Mičura (1883–1946) was a Slovak politician and lawyer, and from 1939 to 1945 he served as president of the Supreme Court in Bratislava. The Red Army deported him in 1945 to Moscow, where he died in prison in 1946.

In August 1946 the trial was already taking place and Horák was ever more urgently instructed to negotiate with the Soviets for them to be handed over.³²⁸ Czechoslovakia had for a year been asking for Ján Spišiak. During the autumn the urgency to surrender Spišiak, Čatloš and Sokol increased,³²⁹ and on 22 November Horák received an urgent telegram: "The trial of Dr. Tiso and company begins on 2 December. Intervene in their [Čatloš, etc.] speeded surrender."³³⁰ The next day, 23 November 1946, Horák was urged even more emphatically on the same matter by the general secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Arnošt Heidrich. On 29 November, Horák told Prague that he had intervened with Dekanozov in the matter of the surrender of Spišiak, Čatloš, Turanec and Mičura. Tiso's trial began in the first days of December and it was December before the surrender of these men to Czechoslovakia began to be specific. It was a very urgent matter for the Czechoslovak government, and on 21 December 1946 Heidrich telegraphed that, should there be any problem in transporting the men across Poland, they should be sent by air.³³¹ On 24 December 1946, MID informed the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow that it would hand over the persons in question at the station in Chop, unless the Czechoslovak side had another suggestion. The Czechoslovak side did not like the idea of Chop and so the MID was handed a note stating that the handover in Chop would cause serious difficulties and proposing that they should be sent directly to Prague by air. The Soviet Union agreed and on 30 December 1946 sent a note to say that the Soviet authorities were willing to transport them to Prague on 10 January 1947. Ambassador Horák responded with a personal thank-you letter to the deputy foreign minister of the USSR, Dekanozov. On 3 January, Horák informed Prague that the head of the 4th European Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry A.M. Alexandrov had told him the day of the flight—7 January—and Clementis wrote by return that the airplane could land at Prague airport. He confirmed that the Soviet crew and entourage would receive the same sort of military passes members of the armed forces received when visiting Carlsbad (Karlovy Vary) for treatment. Counselor Kašpárek immediately told Alexandrov at the Foreign Ministry.³³² The Czechoslovak diplomats took great care that the transport ran smoothly—they paid special attention to the weather forecast, which was promising.

I have provided partial details of this case to show that the Soviet side did have an interest in handing over certain persons, and that their repatriation could be arranged relatively quickly. The Soviet Union had an incontestable interest in the trial of Tiso and therefore the persons who figured in it could be released without problems. On other occasions, no matter how convincing the arguments on the Czechoslovak side, their efforts bore no result.

The Lists and Nationality

The Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry clearly proceeded as fast as it could in this phase of negotiations about repatriation. As early as 16 August, it sent a telegram to Moscow saying that the lists were ready and that a courier was on the way with them. The ministerial approach confirmed what Pavlov had said—that Czechoslovakia was not interested in the Hungarians and Germans. These were not only separated off into special systems, they were not included in these lists at all. It was clearly stated in the accompanying telegram that: “We consider the lists of Germans and Hungarians to be irrelevant, since we are not interested in their return.”

Moreover, a large question mark hung over the category of prisoners of war. It was not possible to have exact documentation for them, since many names were included in the lists on the basis of the family thinking that they may have been captured. They thought the Soviet side would have far more exact records of the prisoners of war. They did indeed, but in negotiations lasting for over a year the Soviet side had clearly showed that not only did it not want to put its lists at the disposal of the Czechoslovaks, it refused to negotiate unless the Czechoslovak side handed over its own exact lists. Dvořáček, the Foreign Ministry official who wrote this, still asked the Czechoslovak diplomats in Moscow to tell Pavlov that putting together the lists according to the requirements of the MID would last several months, which would only delay the whole process while not making the repatriations any easier for the Soviets because the Czechoslovak side would not be able to give the current whereabouts of the interned in the Soviet Union. The Soviet side on the other hand had made it clear from the beginning that negotiations about repatriation could not even begin without the precise addresses of the internees being provided.

At the same time, Vlastimil Borek wrote to the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow, dispatching up-to-date lists in the name of the minister. Borek had at one time been a leader of the anarcho-communist and anti-militarist movement; from 1925 he was a member of the Communist Party of

Czechoslovakia and for some years during the First Republic an official of the Society for Cultural and Economic Rapprochement with the New Russia. During World War II he was in the USSR, where he worked first as editor of Czechoslovak broadcasting on Moscow Radio and then as press attaché of the Czechoslovak embassy. After the war, his path led to the Foreign Ministry. We begin to come across his name in documents about the deportees relatively frequently during the period when he was one of the leading Communist experts on the Soviet Union. In 1949 he was to enjoy the position of deputy foreign minister. He did not remain long in that high function, however, as he died in 1952 at the age of sixty-six.

Borek's formulations in the documents of 1946 concerning the deported are relatively temperate; he did not come out with sharp pronouncements about an interest or lack of it regarding some Czechoslovak citizens, even if we can sense this between the lines. Borek wrote that even this time the lists could not be worked out exactly, because some of the police chiefs did not distinguish between internees and prisoners of war and mixed them together in the lists. He added that if he succeeded in finding out that some names in the lists are those of prisoners of war, they would be removed. Borek wrote that in the end they reached the figure of 1,497 interned Slovaks, ten Czechs, and seventy-seven Russian and Ukrainian emigrants who were Czechoslovak citizens. He added that the number of the internees at the present time was probably smaller, partly because not all returned internees had reported to the ministry and also because "one has to count on a certain number of deaths in the internment camps,"³³³ which was the harsh truth. The Czechoslovak authorities had a very naïve image of the conditions in the camps and of the mortality which reigned there. Borek asked Horák to ensure that in the case of a death the MID would inform the Czechoslovak side, so that the person concerned could be certified as dead and probate proceedings inaugurated. When one considers that the Czechoslovak diplomats had been fighting in vain over lists of interned Czechoslovak citizens, lists of people who had already been on the repatriation transports, and lists of people who had been sentenced in the Soviet Union, while the Soviet side had been unable and above all unwilling to provide any information about anything, it is hard to imagine that the Soviets would provide information about the deaths of individuals. The naïveté of this request stands out vividly in the context of the actual conditions in the camps.

The lists sent to the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow on this occasion as a basis for negotiation with the Soviets have not survived in the ministry archive, and there has been no success so far in finding them in the Archive

of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation. We cannot therefore reach any judgment about them, but one thing is worth special attention. In a copy of the note of 5 September 1946 which accompanied the handing over of the lists to the MID, it is written that the lists contain the names of citizens of Czech, Slovak, Russian and Ukrainian nationalities abducted from beyond the borders of the Czechoslovak Republic.³³⁴ Once already, on 9 February 1946, names of citizens of Russian and Ukrainian ethnicity appeared in the category of deported Czechoslovak civilians. At this time, Czechoslovakia still included these citizens in its requests for repatriation, but later, under pressure from the Soviets, it stopped doing so.

Complex versus Selective: Two Concepts of Repatriation and the Decree of the Ministry of the Interior, 26 September 1946

From the beginning, there were on the Czechoslovak side two differing approaches to repatriation. The first, predominant in the early period, required unconditional repatriation for all Czechoslovak nationals without exception and judgment on the guilt of this or that individual to take place following repatriation. Gradually, however, a second approach began to appear—selective repatriation. This approach triumphed around the middle of 1947. It had, however, manifested itself earlier from time to time, at least from 1946. Its main bastion was the Ministry of the Interior.

On 6 September 1946, a conference was held of representatives from the Foreign Ministry, the Interior Ministry, and the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Care. At this conference, according to minutes taken by the Interior Ministry, the participants agreed that, through actions connected with repatriation and reemigration, “elements very often entered [Czechoslovakia] who do not belong here.” To avoid this phenomenon in future, the participants decided that the Czechoslovak missions abroad and other repatriation and reemigration organs should prepare a list of everyone requesting repatriation or reemigration. These lists should be handed to Department “Z” of the Interior Ministry for its consideration. A negative standpoint on their part would mean that the applicant would not be permitted repatriation or reemigration. The Czechoslovak embassy should immediately stop sending repatriation transports and individuals until they received the agreement of the Interior Ministry, and the same related to all Czechoslovak repatriation and intelligence officers and repatriation missions.³³⁵ The Interior Ministry repeatedly urged that this resolution should be observed; for example, on 14 November 1946 it categorically requested that persons who had to be

repatriated, or those who wanted to "reemigrate" should first be certified by the Interior Ministry.³³⁶

Following the conference, a directive was issued by the Ministry of the Interior which caused considerable difficulties. Ambassador Horák drew attention to these regularly. They concerned the fact that the Soviet authorities were not capable of giving the Czechoslovaks lists of persons included in the transports and thus dozens of repatriates crossed the Czechoslovak borders without anyone knowing who they actually were. How then could a request for certification be sent to the Interior Ministry in advance? The attitude taken by the Interior Ministry completely ignored the situation at ground level and was intended purely to strengthen the position of the ministry. We should not forget that a treaty had been signed by the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia which established the principles of competence on liberated Czechoslovak territory. Not only was the treaty being infringed by the Soviet organs, but even the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry with its decree proceeded contrary to the stipulation of this treaty. If the principle, advocated by several influential officials of the Foreign Ministry, was to intervene for every Czechoslovak citizen, and if this principle was implemented by the Czechoslovak officials in Moscow (even during the official governmental visit led by Prime Minister Klement Gottwald in the summer of 1946), then the approach of the Interior Ministry led in the opposite direction and was counterproductive.

However, this directive did not manifest itself too much in the course of the negotiations themselves about the repatriation of deported Czechoslovak citizens, even though it constantly hung in the air. On 18 December 1946, Horák returned to the resolution of the Ministry of the Interior and asked the Foreign Ministry whether he should continue with individual interventions for internees if it concerned cases where he had presented a request for intervention before the decree of the Interior Ministry had come into force, that is, before 11 November 1946. In the case of requests he received after that date, Horák assumed that these were cases which the Interior Ministry cleared. On 24 September 1946, the Foreign Ministry had even sent transcripts of requests from family members of interned Czechoslovak citizens and prisoners of war with the instruction that the Moscow embassy should carry out a special intervention for these citizens and, if relevant, use the letters enclosed. This concerned two groups of officers of the former Slovak Army. The first group (Lt. Col. Kallo and others) had been passed on to the Red Army by Czechoslovak organs of the Defense Intelligence (Obranné zpravodajství, OBZ) and the second group (Major Orišek and others) had been captured by the Soviets at home.³³⁷

Vladimír Outrata: Instructions for Intervention

The memorandum of the Foreign Ministry with instructions to intervene³³⁸ was signed by Vladimír Outrata. Outrata held to the treaty of 8 May 1944 on principle. He insisted on the return of all Czechoslovak citizens without exception. In the case of the first group of prisoners of war, he stated that they had been surrendered to the Red Army without investigation, and concerning the second group, that the group was not captured during military operations with weapons in their hands and that thus neither group consisted of prisoners of war or cases coming under § 7 of the treaty. As well as members of the two groups, the embassy had to intervene for everyone mentioned in the list insofar as it knew where the internees could be found. Outrata even said that the Czechoslovak data supplied by the embassy to the Soviet organs would supplement the Soviet documentation and, in the end, help toward better evidence and more flexible repatriation. Outrata wrote that the quantity of letters, primarily from family members, was growing considerably. The population was increasingly angry that a year and a half after the end of the war the repatriation of deported civilians had still not taken place. The ministry could not keep on making promises and encouraging families to be hopeful about the return of the deportees. The lack of specific facts was embarrassing, wrote Outrata. The ministry had no explanation as to why persons had been detained and deported, especially in cases without any apparent guilt; it did not know where people were being held, or when they could expect to be released, or anything else about them. Outrata pointed to the fact that people could not fail to notice that it was mainly Hungarians and Germans who had been released, even former members of the SS, and the Soviet information service had moreover announced the release of a large number of foreign prisoners of war. He further argued that, as an ally of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia should have precedence over enemy states. According to Outrata, that led Czechoslovak citizens to believe that the government did not want to assert itself in insisting on the release of the internees. People's bitterness was exacerbated by news from returnees of the conditions in the internment camps, and many people decided to let the international public know about this matter through foreign embassies. The Foreign Ministry would not be able to prevent this, it would not even be able to deny it, and in the end it could lead to doubts about Czechoslovak sovereignty and Czechoslovak–Soviet friendship in the eyes of the Western press. All these arguments had to be used by the Czechoslovak diplomats in Moscow—above all Ambassador Horák—in negotiations with the Soviet side. Outrata,

in the conclusion of his memorandum—which he signed on behalf of Minister Masaryk and which State Secretary Clementis most probably did not share in formulating—repeated the main argument:

In the case of a repeat of the argument that we are exposing ourselves in favor of compromised elements, the embassy should take the standpoint that the issue is about our citizens, and that if there are collaborators and Fascist elements among them, any decisions about their guilt and punishment belong to our courts where there is access to defense counsel.

Even in exceptional cases when, according to § 7, Czechoslovak citizens did belong before a Soviet court, the Soviet side has to inform Czechoslovakia, and the persons involved should have the possibility of a proper defense, wrote Outrata.

Vladimír Outrata and Jiří Horák were among those officers of the Foreign Ministry who did the most for the repatriation of deported citizens. Their efforts, however, were continuously eroded and undermined by those who tried to ingratiate themselves with the Soviets, who were afraid to present the Czechoslovak standpoint as a principle, and who abused the repatriation process to get rid of some ethnic groups.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was trying to provide Ambassador Horák with the lists. Dvořáček wrote in his telegram to Horák that he did not manage to finish the lists in time for the next courier. He therefore instructed Horák that at his next meeting with the Soviets he should try to convince them that decisions about the internees should have nothing to do with the lists; and that he requested the Soviets to give an overall instruction to all the camps for the immediate release of all Czechoslovak internees and prisoners of war. According to Dvořáček, the lists could not be completely precise, and their completion only delayed an objective settlement of the matter. Dvořáček was right in principle, but when reading his instructions one cannot rid oneself of the feeling that his instructions did not reflect the development which had taken place concerning the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens in the past year. His instructions would hardly make the situation any easier for Horák.

Clementis's Memorandum

Dvořáček also told Ambassador Horák that on 2 November Vladimír Clementis had submitted a memorandum to Zorin about the internees, and that he was sending a copy of this memorandum with the next courier.³³⁹ This information caused the Czechoslovak ambassador an unpleasant

moment during his visit to Dekanozov on 14 November. Horák did not yet have a copy of the memorandum; nonetheless, he could rely on the information that the text of the memorandum would come with the next courier, as both Dvořáček and Outrata had written to him, and he therefore supposed that the MID had already been informed about the memorandum by Zorin. In good faith therefore he referred to this memorandum during his meeting with Dekanozov. Dekanozov, however, categorically denied that the Soviet side had received any such memorandum. Landed in this situation, Horák, known for his academic precision, probably did not feel at his best. Most importantly, his position was considerably weakened. He tried to implement the arguments given to him by Dvořáček, chiefly pointing to the seriousness of the situation, which required a general decision since the presentation of lists was holding everything up. He reminded Dekanozov of Gottwald's visit to Moscow the previous summer, when the Soviet side had promised Gottwald that the whole question would be solved by a general measure. He later related that Dekanozov apparently listened to these arguments carefully, and paid particular attention to the difficulty which had emerged for the Czechoslovak government, and promised that he would personally take care of an early solution to the whole issue. Horák's comment, which he added to his report of the whole visit, shows, however, that the ambassador took a somewhat skeptical view of the promises of a general decision and broad measures to be taken. He already had his own experience with the repatriation agenda, and knew very well that pointing to the fact that the lists were unreliable and only held things up did not dissuade the Soviets from demanding lists, nor encourage them to present their own lists. Ambassador Horák therefore wrote to his ministry that he would hand over all the lists when they arrived, that he would continue to intercede for the release of internees, and that he would intervene again if, after some time had elapsed, Dekanozov's promise had not moved things forward.³⁴⁰

The Czechoslovak diplomats experienced many more unpleasant situations, and we can take a small example from a later date. On 3 December 1947, the head of the Financial Department of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs negotiated with A.M. Alexandrov at the MID. The first secretary at the embassy, Ľudovít Mičátek, was also present. Alexandrov made a sharp rejoinder to Mičátek that the MID would not reply to notes such as Note no. 13943/47 of 28 November from the Czechoslovak embassy. This was a note which asked for information about Gerhard Ranz, a German prisoner of war. Alexandrov gave Mičátek the note to read, and Mičátek had to apologize for the fact that it had been written by an in-

competent employee and that it would not happen again.³⁴¹ From time to time, the Czechoslovak diplomats complained that the Soviets behaved arrogantly and preached at them. This small example is evidence of the impolite and “undiplomatic” way the Soviet diplomats sometimes behaved, although in this case it appears that the Czechoslovak note may not have been entirely in order.

It gradually began to be clear that Clementis might not have given Zorin the memorandum, but merely told the Soviet ambassador what it contained. Dvořáček informed Horák of this by telephone. Nevertheless, the memorandum might have been given to the Soviet side additionally, in the context of Clementis’s verbal delivery. The Soviet side, however, most likely decided not to recognize that Clementis had delivered the memorandum or spoken of it; or else Clementis himself gave the Czechoslovak Ministry officials incorrect information about the memorandum. In any case, the memorandum did not emerge even after the 20 November, because on 22 November Dvořáček again—clearly on Horák’s urging—repeated that Clementis had informed Zorin only verbally. The memorandum does, however, exist—it can be found in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry in Prague. We can only guess as to why, at the time the memorandum was being talked about and when it created an embarrassing situation for Horák, it lay somewhere among the documents on Clementis’s or someone else’s desk, and from there went to the archive, long after the whole affair was over.

What was this memorandum about? It was formulated somewhat sharply and pointed to the key issues in a very assertive way. The formulation and structure of the memorandum are substantially congruent with the memorandum sent to Horák on 24 September by Vladimír Outrata—in essence, all that was missing was some specific data documenting that in the course of repatriation the Soviet organs were giving priority to Germans and Hungarians, that they were repatriating only sick and incapable Slovaks and Czechs, and of the prisoners of war only regular soldiers of Slovak ethnicity, although in the case of other nationalities the officers had been repatriated as well. The memorandum stated, for example, that there were 64 Slovaks and Czechs in the transport of 19 September, but 309 Hungarians and 93 Germans; in the transport of 26 August 1946, 9 Czechs but 127 Germans.³⁴²

We can assume that the memorandum was based on Vladimír Outrata’s ideas, or that he drafted it. We can imagine hypothetically, though we do not have proof, that in mid-1946 Clementis could not do other than to use the background information prepared for him by senior officials of the ministry (in this case, Vladimír Outrata), and that he did

not dare to give the Soviet side such sharp material in writing, which is why he passed it on only verbally. Then, after a passage of time, the memorandum found its way into the archive without ever having been seen by the Soviets. We move here on the ground of speculation but as long as the original of this memorandum is not found in the archive of the MID we can assume that this is what may have taken place. We know from other situations that Clementis did not always behave toward Soviet diplomats as a leading diplomat representing Czechoslovakia, but rather as an official of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.

The problem of the internees and the deported Czechoslovak citizens also came up in parliament. On 13 November 1946, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Constituent National Assembly asked the foreign minister for a solution to this issue. Horák was instructed to let them know "what is happening with the interned and imprisoned Slovaks, and when we can expect they will all return home?"³⁴³ Horák did not reply to this question with a comprehensive summing up of the current state; after a few days, he sent a brief telegram to the Foreign Ministry informing it that a transport had just passed through Moscow with thirty-seven Slovak officers who had been released and were on their way to Czechoslovakia. This transport was completely exceptional, already in that it went via Moscow. Horák had most probably spoken with the repatriates, because he then informed Prague that he was sending a list and that the next transport, in which there should be around sixty Czechs, was to follow in the next days.³⁴⁴ On 2 December 1946, Horák sent information that a transport of repatriates, mainly Germans and Hungarians, had just arrived in Moscow, and was to continue to Czechoslovakia in a few days.

Horák's Intervention with Vyshinsky, 29 December 1946

Ambassador Horák used his visit to Vyshinsky on 29 December 1946 to remind him again of the issue of the internees and, most saliently, that he had an urgent request from the Czechoslovak government. He reported back to Clementis the next day. He had again emphasized to Vyshinsky the serious internal political difficulties which were emerging for the Czechoslovak government and asked Vyshinsky to intervene, in accordance with the discussions with the Czechoslovak government during its official visit to Moscow in July. He repeated that at that time it had been decided to solve the matter by a general, i.e., collective provision, and told Vyshinsky that the embassy would gladly help the 4th European Department of the MID, and that this cooperation would certainly be useful for a

successful and rapid approach. Vyshinsky replied that he well remembered the discussions with Gottwald in July, that he would now devote his full attention to this issue, and that everything would be done for the problem to be solved as soon as possible by a general provision. Nevertheless, Horák wrote to Clementis that he would wait to see what the Soviet side did, while keeping it on his agenda and intervening again if necessary.³⁴⁵

Vyshinsky's report of this conversation is more terse.³⁴⁶ He only noted that Horák had asked about the speeding up of the repatriation of the interned Czechs and Slovaks, that he gave Dekanozov a memorandum about it, and that on 5 September 1946 the Czechoslovak embassy sent Note no. 669 to the MID. (I have not been able, in my research in the archive of the MID, to find the papers quoted in the document as having been given to the Soviet side.) The visit ended with Vyshinsky's promise to investigate the matter.

Horák experienced a number of similar meetings. On 16 January 1947, for example, he asked Vyshinsky—yet again—to devote some attention to the interned citizens. He emphasized what he had told Vyshinsky during his visit of 29 December 1946. Again, however, he got an evasive reply. Vyshinsky said that after Horák's previous visit he had passed on the Czechoslovak notes and memoranda and that he would follow it all up because he was interested in seeing that the question was solved definitively and above all soon.³⁴⁷

Horák listened to assurances about how the Soviet government was trying and would try and so on, while these words of promise as a rule meant nothing. It is true that at the end of 1946 the situation did shift forward a little more energetically, and information about returning internees began to be more frequent. Sometimes the embassy learned about transports from quite unexpected quarters. For example, on 31 December 1946 Horák received a telegram from Clementis³⁴⁸ which said that information had appeared in the Czechoslovak press from Member of Parliament Dr. Ševčík, who had just returned from Moscow. The Soviets had allegedly told Ševčík that a large transport of Czechoslovak citizens from Slovakia was in the process of being sent. Neither Ševčík, nor the Foreign Ministry, nor Horák had any more detailed information and so it was possible that it was another of the Soviets' little games.

3. The Enforcement of the Selective Principle

Horák's Intervention with Golubev, 8 January 1947

On 8 January 1947, Ambassador Horák visited a man who was a key figure in the repatriation issue. This was the plenipotentiary of the government of the USSR for repatriation, Lieutenant General Konstantin D. Golubev. Just as with Vyshinsky a few days earlier, Horák urgently requested the fastest possible repatriation of internees and drew attention to the importance of the whole matter in Czechoslovak domestic politics. When Horák reported to the ministry on his meeting with Golubev, he did not forget to mention that this General had, in his own words, an especially heartfelt relationship with Czechoslovakia. Of all the Soviet players, it was only Golubev who had announced that the deportees must be returned immediately. That, however, was in the summer of 1945. With the passing of time, Golubev became involved in the mechanism of the repatriation issue, his vocabulary became more wary, and all his sympathy for Czechoslovakia—however he presented it to the Czechoslovak diplomats—did nothing to help the repatriation of Czechoslovaks. In their meeting at the beginning of January 1947, Golubev told Horák, as proof of how great was the volume of repatriation, that from May 1945 altogether 45,580 soldiers and civilians had been repatriated, of whom 9,579 had been captured with weapons in their hands. This enormous number was not really so stunning if we consider that this referred to all the repatriated, not just those from Czechoslovakia. For the most part, they were German prisoners of war, and since it was already January 1947, we see that the release of prisoners of war was not going very quickly at all. Golubev promised Horák that in the next few days a transport of about a hundred Czechoslovaks would be sent and that a list would be given to the Czechoslovak side. In this situation, Horák must have had to ask the Foreign Ministry how he should proceed, because it must have seemed impossible to him to respect the decree of the Interior Ministry of 6 September 1946.³⁴⁹

We have so far seen the Soviet documents that were presented to the Czechoslovak side. But how did the Soviets themselves look at the issue of the interned Czechoslovak citizens? Was there a difference between the way the Soviet players talked about repatriation with the Czechoslovak diplomats, and how they talked about it between themselves? In the archive of the MID I found a secret memorandum which Vyshinsky sent on 10 January 1947 to Secretary Kuznetsov of the Central Committee VKP(b). It was actually a copy of the memorandum, because the original

was sent from the MID to the TsK VKP(b) (Tsentralny Komitet Vse-soyuznoy Kommunisticheskoy Partii [bolshevikov], Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party [bolsheviks]), in whose archive it should theoretically be found. The designation “secret” restricted the document, but in the Soviet Union the “restricted” regime was much stricter, and a great deal wider, than anywhere else. We can say with little exaggeration that in the Soviet Union practically everything was restricted, and that it is quite difficult to find a document in the MID Archive which is not marked “secret.”

Vyshinsky reported in the memorandum that 1,845 Czechs and Slovaks were in camps run by the Interior Ministry of the USSR and in the special hospitals of the Ministry of Health. Of these, 1,388 were prisoners of war (including 548 officers) and 457 were Czechoslovak internees. The document states that all these Czechoslovak citizens, both prisoners of war and internees, were held in the USSR in connection with the State Commissariat of Defense (Gosudarstvenniy komissariat oborony, GOKO) Regulation no. 9843 of 13 August 1945, according to which officers of the former German Army and persons serving in enemy corrective and intelligence organs and in the SS, SA and SD units and the Gestapo were not eligible for liberation. The document goes on to say that around 330 interned Czechoslovak citizens were arrested during military operations and cleansing by the rear echelons of the Red Army. It added that materials were available which convict them of criminal and treacherous activities on behalf of the enemy, and of active participation in brutalities carried out on Czechoslovak territory. Vyshinsky's material concerned citizens of Yugoslavia as well as Czechoslovaks, and he concluded with the standpoint of the MID, that it would be appropriate for the 1,845 Czech and Slovak prisoners of war and internees and another 579 Serbs, Croatians, Slovenes and Bosnians to be handed over to the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav governments, and for the compromising materials possessed by the Ministry of the Interior of the USSR likewise to be handed over to the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav governments. He added in conclusion that Molotov agreed with the handing over.³⁵⁰

This memorandum confirms that the Soviet Union had not taken into consideration the provisions of the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of 8 May 1944. The Soviet Union included everything in the category “cleansing of persons committing brutalities” and the category “SS or Gestapo,” which was the routine argument. At the same time, we see that the Soviet Union had decided to release Czechoslovak prisoners of war and internees. This decision differs from the one the Soviets had been insisting on several

weeks previously, that persons who had committed criminal acts against the Soviet Union would be put before the Soviet courts. This shift in the direction of releasing detained persons, whether prisoners of war or internees seemed quite promising. However, we are stopped short by the number of persons given. Vyshinsky's memorandum gives completely different numbers from those reported to the Czechoslovak side. In the category of prisoners of war the numbers given are very low.

The Repatriation Principles of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior and the Pragmatic Approach of the Soviet Union

On the Soviet side at that time the repatriations moved forward a little. In February 1947 Ambassador Horák was able to inform Prague that the Soviet plenipotentiary for repatriation, General Golubev, had decided to carry out the repatriation of the internees in such a way that the repatriates would be gathered together in the Luisdorf camp near Odessa, where they would be screened by an official of the Czechoslovak embassy and after that be organized into transports and taken back to their homeland.³⁵¹

At the same time, the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior kept the pressure on, claiming that it was the only body competent to decide who could be repatriated and who could not. The Interior Ministry issued Memorandum no. Z/R-3643/83-9/11-46-1 ("Principles Valid for Internal Decision Making by the Ministry of the Interior Concerning Repatriation and Reemigration") and sent it to the embassy in Moscow on 15 March 1947. In the accompanying letter Borek emphasized that only the Ministry of the Interior would decide about repatriation and reemigration, and that any other decision making, for example, by the commissioner of the interior in Bratislava, was to be understood only as advisory, and no one was to be repatriated on its basis. At this time the camp in Luisdorf near Odessa, where the persons intended for repatriation were concentrated, was already in operation. A screening official from the embassy in Moscow was sent there from time to time. Borek now writes that this official must first screen the persons according to the memorandum, and then send the names and other data of the applicants by telegraph to the Interior Ministry in Prague. The Interior Ministry would decide whether repatriation would be allowed or forbidden. This decision would be conveyed to the embassy in Moscow and only then could repatriation take place.³⁵²

This method of decision making must have caused serious complications and held up the process of repatriation considerably. Even though the Interior Ministry pledged that it would carry out this agenda as quickly

as possible, it would be difficult to screen applicants so quickly that the reply could reach Luisdorf while the embassy representative was still there. In his absence the repatriation would be left in the hands of the Soviets. There was also the problem that the embassy official traveled to Odessa only sporadically and had to ask permission from the Soviet side. We can imagine cases where repatriation was contested or refused: these unfortunate people faced the journey back to the labor camps, and the end of all the intense hopes that had kept them going in the repatriation camp at Luisdorf must have been devastating.

The attitude of the Interior Ministry provoked indignation in the Foreign Ministry. Both the officials at headquarters and the diplomats in Moscow who already had experience with the Soviets over the repatriation agenda, and in some cases were even directly on the terrain in the repatriation camp in Luisdorf, saw plainly that implementation of the requirement from the Interior Ministry was a major obstacle. Some of them still advocated the principle that they should intervene for every Czechoslovak citizen and that the Soviet Union should return all Czechoslovak citizens without exception. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague obediently forwarded to the Moscow embassy the instructions from the Interior Ministry, provided these were accepted at a governmental level; at the same time they continued to negotiate them within the Foreign Ministry.

At this time Ambassador Horák came to an agreement with General Golubev that the Czechoslovak prisoners of war and internees would be concentrated before repatriation at the camp of Luisdorf near Odessa. This indicated that the Soviet Union had begun to approach repatriation constructively and was showing a real effort to return the detainees. According to the documents, the camp in Luisdorf was overcrowded, and it was necessary to move the internees on as quickly as possible. I think that practical considerations were behind this. Insofar as the detainees and internees were useful to the Soviet side as a labor force, the Soviets were not interested in releasing them and endeavored to keep them on construction sights and in mines as long as possible. Once the physical condition of the internees had deteriorated to such a state that they could not work due to exhaustion and illness, the Soviets were ready to release them, and even to get rid of them as quickly as possible. There was no way in which the Soviets would tolerate a long-term stay in the repatriation camp in Luisdorf. For the prisoners of war and internees the camp was something of a relief, but for the Soviet Union it was an unnecessary expenditure.

The Conflict between the Foreign Ministry and the Interior Ministry over the Approach to Repatriation

On 18 March 1947 Robert Schmelz (sometimes spelled Šmelc), at that time working in Department II/1 of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, drafted a rough note for State Secretary Vladimír Clementis on the matter of the interned Czechoslovak citizens. He summed up in this the problems around the agreement of the Czechoslovak side to start the repatriation of individuals. The standpoint of the Foreign Ministry was based on the following principles:

In the interest of speeding up the settlement it is necessary to intervene for every Czechoslovak citizen deported to the USSR, insofar as the request is furnished with a confirmation by the relevant local (or regional) national committee of the national and political reliability of the person concerned.

As long as requests for intervention were sent to the Foreign Ministry with a certificate from the commissioner of the interior in Bratislava, the intervention took place on the basis of this certificate without further delays. Schmelz pointed out that the Interior Ministry was insisting on dealing with all repatriations exclusively on its own competence and that otherwise it considered that the repatriation was invalid.

In this situation the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry was even more categorical in stipulating its role in the screening of repatriates, and started to turn down certificates from the Slovak commissioner of the interior. However, this certificate was the most frequent document in the files of the internees, who as a rule came from Slovakia. In his report, Robert Schmelz justifies the decision of Department II/1 not to argue with the Ministry of the Interior concerning its standpoint. The Foreign Ministry considered the position of the Interior Ministry:

as not being very appropriate, for it weakens our defense vis-à-vis the Soviet thesis deriving from the treaty of 8 May 1944, § 7. This department likewise has certain doubts regarding the practical viability of the guidelines of the Ministry of the Interior. However, not wanting this to turn into a uselessly abstract debate which would postpone the return of the internees to the Czechoslovak Republic even more, whereby a certain amount of important moral capital would be lost, Department II/1 decided to wait and see how the transfer will take place at a practical level.

After that Schmelz passed to Clementis the decision about whether new requests for intervention confirmed up to now by the Slovak authori-

ties, should (1) have this as a basis for intervention with the Soviets without delay or (2) without regard to the standpoint of the Slovak authorities (i.e., the commissioner of the interior) be put before the Ministry of the Interior and no intervention with the Soviet authorities to take place until the request had been approved by the Ministry of the Interior. Schmelz recommended they proceeded according to (1)—that is, intervene immediately, giving his reason that to delay would be to behave with duplicity, since:

Requests for intervention to be carried out would be checked with the Ministry of the Interior by Department Z/VII; however, agreement to carry out the repatriation—just when the repatriates will already be prepared in Odessa—must again be requested from Department R of the same ministry.³⁵³

This memorandum signaled a conflict between the Foreign Ministry and the Interior Ministry which sharpened in the following weeks. Schmelz's report and proposal was assessed at the highest level in the ministry; they are not initialed by Jan Masaryk since he did not see them, but Borek saw them, as his signature witnesses, and certainly discussed them with Clementis. Clementis's decision on 4 April plainly supported Schmelz's standpoint. There is a note on the report by Dr. Oldřich Černý, which says that: "The state secretary agrees with this standpoint, that the requests from Slovakia be handled according to Point 1, that is, that screenings carried out in Slovakia are an adequate basis for repatriation."³⁵⁴

After Clementis had supported the Soviet Department of his ministry in this way, an intensive discussion took place between the two ministries which ended in a provisional compromise. The Interior Ministry gave interim agreement to the inclusion of the transfer of interned Czechoslovak citizens from Odessa on condition that these citizens "have been or will be noted in the lists here or, insofar as it is possible, be reasonably supposed to be Czechoslovak citizens."

The Ministry of the Interior stipulated that "in doubtful cases—for example, persons without a proper knowledge of Czech or Slovak or suspicious in other ways—the provisional agreement of the Ministry of the Interior will be requested for repatriation to be carried out."

This all had to be managed by the official of the Moscow embassy sent to Odessa. Everything indicates that in this phase the Czechoslovak authorities were capable of negotiating cooperatively and effectively—the above-mentioned agreement between the Foreign Ministry and the Interior

Ministry was reached by telephone; the ambassador in Moscow was informed quickly by telegraph, and the agreed principles were drafted in the course of the following week.³⁵⁵

Ambassador Horák's Negotiations with Golubev, 24 March 1947

The situation developed relatively rapidly, but not as smoothly as might have been the case. Ambassador Horák called on Lieutenant General Golubev on 24 March 1947 in the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Repatriation. Colonel Gavrilov and Lieutenant Colonel Kopt also took part. The Soviet side had prepared itself for this discussion and General Golubev had prepared his position with the MID. Right at the start he gave Horák a list of fifty-one persons who had been selected by the Soviet side for repatriation and wanted Horák to confirm their Czechoslovak citizenship. Horák asked Golubev for permission for the second secretary of the embassy, Emil Schulz, to visit the repatriation camp in Odessa—the screenings of the repatriates by certified employees of the Moscow embassy had to begin.

It should be mentioned that the movement of diplomats in the territory of the Soviet Union was very limited and carefully controlled. Even in Moscow, foreign diplomats could move around only in demarcated parts of the city, and entry to places not specifically permitted was strictly forbidden. When Horák requested permission for Schulz's visit to the camp at Luisdorf, Golubev replied that he would look at the possibility of allowing this journey by Schulz accompanied by an officer from the Soviet side. On 29 March 1947 A.M. Alexandrov and F.T. Gusev, at their level, said they considered Schulz's journey to be possible, and on 26 April 1947, a month after the presentation of the request, Vyshinsky agreed to the trip.

Horák told Golubev again what he had emphasized so many times in discussion with the Soviet side, that the Czechoslovak government was experiencing considerable political difficulties at home in that a substantial majority of Czechoslovak citizens had not yet returned from Soviet internment. This conflicted with the fact that, according to information from the Soviet government, all the citizens from the Allied countries had already been repatriated. Horák repeatedly urged the speeding up of the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens from the Soviet camps and told Golubev that insofar as a solution of this issue was concerned, the Soviet government had to "make some kind of special decision," after which he would present the issue officially to the MID. Horák told Golubev that the Czechoslovak government wanted to finish the repatriation of its citizens

from the Soviet Union during April and May 1947, so that this conclusion could be publicly recognized on the anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia.

Golubev's reply indicated a problem. He said that the government of the Soviet Union did not need any "special decision" about the repatriation of Czechoslovaks, because the government had made a decision about the repatriation of all foreign nationals in January 1945, and on the basis of this decision all foreigners, including Czechoslovaks, were already repatriated. Golubev added that it could not be ruled out that there might be some Czechoslovak citizens among prisoners of war still on the territory of the Soviet Union. The Soviet organs were carrying out a very careful screening process and should they come across any Czechoslovak citizen, they would immediately send them home. According to Golubev, a few hundred Czechoslovak citizens might be found in this way, but there was no way in which there could be thousands, as some Czechoslovak representatives were insisting. He argued that many foreign representatives assumed that their missing citizens must be in Soviet camps, and overlooked the huge number of lives claimed by the war.

Golubev knew the situation in the prison camps and internment camps very well and therefore his argumentations differed a little from the standard replies of the Soviet diplomats. Golubev recalled that the Soviet Union had already repatriated 90,000 Czechoslovak citizens and that the situation in the camps in the Soviet Union and on the territory of its Allies, where there were hundreds and thousands of refugees and evacuees, among whom were certainly some Czechoslovaks, was generally known. But he again repeated that the Soviet authorities had used every possible channel to search them out, and repatriated them immediately.

The words about carefully seeking out individual Czechoslovaks were far from being the truth. The Soviet side was bombarded with data about Czechoslovaks still held in the camps. In spring 1947 Czechoslovakia had given specific data, including the locality of the camps, but even this had not been enough for these internees to be released immediately. In fact, some specific data had reached Czechoslovakia during 1946. People who had managed to return home brought information about the camps, about their names, numbers and addresses, and gave information about other Czechoslovaks whom they had met there. Sometimes messages for the families had even reached Czechoslovakia and on rare occasions a postcard. The deported Czechoslovak citizens were not spread too widely—they were concentrated in the Donbas region, in the camp at Cherepovets; in the Caucasus (Nuzalag, Vladikavkaz); in the Sverdlovsk region (Bu-

lanash); and in some other places. Some Czechoslovaks had indeed reached the various corners of the Soviet Union, some of them very far flung such as Dudinka and Magadan. If someone was discovered, however, it was not the result of Soviet research. Golubev's argument was intended to evoke sympathy, which on the whole he obtained easily because he enjoyed emphasizing his friendship toward Czechoslovakia, founded on his participation in the fight for its liberation. The truth was, however, that the Soviet Union was never willing to release Czechoslovak citizens and used incorrect information, delaying tactics and manipulation to postpone the repatriation as much as possible. In 1947 the process of repatriation accelerated somewhat, partly because the prisoners of war and the internees were so exhausted that they stopped being useful to the Soviet Union, but primarily because the deadline was approaching by which the Soviet Union was bound to repatriate all prisoners of war. Like it or not, it had to progress to very intensive repatriation of those who were in camps in the USSR and working in the pits, construction sites and agriculture.

Later in his conversation with Golubev, Horák asked for lists of Czechoslovak citizens who had died in prison camps. Golubev replied that if he had managed to find anything out during screenings of similar events, the Czechoslovak side would have been informed. Golubev's affirmation that nothing was known about Czechoslovak citizens having died in the camps is breathtaking. It is a striking example of how difficult it was to negotiate with the Soviet representatives. To conclude, Golubev asked Horák for the Czechoslovak side to help the Soviet Union in speeding up the repatriation of Soviet citizens from Czechoslovakia, apparently 2,254 according to Soviet information. I will return to the issue raised by Golubev later in this book.

The negotiations at the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Repatriation of the Government of the USSR were very demanding for Horák, and their results could hardly have satisfied him. The written records of the discussion form one of the rare occasions when internal documents from both sides are available. We can compare reports of the same conversation by Golubev and Horák for their respective superiors. Golubev's record of the conversation can be found in the archive of the MID in Moscow. He devoted most of his attention to recording his own arguments and responses, presenting his own performance to his Soviet bosses in the best possible light. His report is clearly disproportionate—if we took it as a faithful recapitulation of the conversation, we would assume that Horák had been silent almost the whole time while Golubev spread his brilliant arguments before him.³⁵⁶

Horák's record of the same conversation, to be found in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, gives us a unique opportunity to compare these two reports.³⁵⁷ The first thing we note is that Horák wrote in his telegraphic report "I visited Golubev today." However, the telegraph is dated 25 March, whereas Golubev dated his report 24 March. It could be explained by the fact that Horák wrote the telegram on 24 March, but it was transcribed by a typist who did not change the date, and sent the following day. However, it could be that Golubev got the date wrong. In this particular situation the discrepancy does not seem significant, but it is a striking example that without reports from both sides we would never come across certain matters. Horák said that he gave Golubev lists of interned Czechoslovak citizens and received from him a list of forty-one waiting for repatriation in the Odessa collection camp, and another ten who were expected to arrive there in the next few days. These figures accord with those Golubev noted in his report. Horák further told Golubev that he intended to send the official "Šulc" [Schulz] to Odessa and that he again warned Golubev of the urgency of this, so that all Czechoslovaks could be repatriated as soon as possible. Horák did not devote as much attention as Golubev to interpreting his own words in elaborate detail for his superiors, but he did quote Golubev's figures in detail. Horák wrote that according to Golubev most Czechoslovak citizens had already been repatriated. According to what he told Horák, 90,264 persons had been transported from the Soviet Union, of which 36,011 were civilians, for the most part liberated from the Germans, and 54,253 soldiers, prisoners of war apparently caught with weapons in their hands. These data are very striking, but it was difficult for Horák to say anything about them because they were impossible to believe. In the conclusion to his report Horák asked urgently for the Foreign Ministry to keep him informed about any new circumstances—above all, which Czechoslovak interned citizens are sending news about themselves to their families, and in which camps they could be found.

***Instruction from the Ministry of the Interior about Repatriation,
9 April 1947***

Arguments about what power the Ministry of the Interior should have over repatriation dragged on, but in spring 1947 its attitude was still relatively benevolent. Perhaps the most liberal instruction was sent by the interior minister through the Foreign Ministry on 9 April 1947.³⁵⁸ It agreed to waive its approval of the repatriation of the Czechoslovak na-

tionals of Czech and Slovak ethnicity. The citizenship document could be a certificate of state citizenship issued after 9 May 1945, or a record on the lists of interned citizens of Slovak ethnicity which were compiled by the Office of the Commissioner of the Interior. As the telegram said, it concerned cases when the Foreign Ministry in its correspondence with the Moscow embassy indicated that individual internees were Czechoslovak citizens and “persons given in the lists according to no. 151.333/II-1/46,” which the author of this work was unable to determine precisely. On 18 April 1947 the Interior Ministry agreed that persons of Czech or Slovak ethnicity who were “incontestably Czechoslovak citizens” could be repatriated immediately without approval in advance from the Interior Ministry. The Interior Ministry’s approval was only to be sought, insofar as it is a question of persons of Czech or Slovak ethnicity whose Czechoslovak citizenship is contestable, or who are not Czechoslovak citizens.”

A major role was played in this by the opinion of the Czechoslovak embassy official sent to the Ministry of the Interior with the personal data of the would-be repatriate. When Borek informed the embassy of the Ministry of the Interior’s standpoint³⁵⁹ he added that in all circumstances precise transport lists must be prepared which had to distinguish whether the repatriate was deported to the USSR from Czechoslovakia after the liberation of the relevant territory of Czechoslovakia, or whether he was a prisoner of war, or whether he had reached the USSR under other circumstances. In addition, the names of the repatriates had to be sent to the Foreign Ministry in Prague by telegraph.

From time to time, however, only the Czechoslovak diplomats received lists of repatriates, sometimes even from Golubev himself, but even later there was no end to various explanations. In mid-April 1947 there was an exchange of several telegrams between the Moscow embassy and the Foreign Ministry in Prague. When Horák’s code no. 137 was deciphered, they must have been delighted by the very promising development of the situation, because it announced the repatriation of 4,159 persons. That was an exceptionally high number and if it was true probably the whole problem was solved once and for all. But then the official Ribárik acquired a list of repatriates—it is not known whether this list arrived at the Foreign Ministry by ordinary post and why in that case Horák coded his data—which contained only fifty-one names. This was clarified with the embassy in Moscow and unfortunately it turned out that the very optimistic number was an error which had occurred during the decoding of Horák’s telegram. In the end, Horák corrected everything so

that the list which Golubev had given him contained only forty-one names,³⁶⁰ ten fewer than Ribárik's list.

Disunity of Czechoslovak Principles, Considerations Regarding the Soviet Union, Failure to Seek International Support and Nationalist Approaches

Those working on the Czechoslovak side were incapable of uniting on firm principles for the repatriation of the internees, and it seems that as time passed they became more disunited. Czechoslovakia was able to formulate its standpoint most succinctly immediately after the war: all Czechoslovaks should be repatriated at once. However, this requirement began to be qualified in various ways, and the principles of repatriation evolved into an instrument of the domestic political battle. This clearly had very unfortunate results for the internees in the Soviet Union.

In the previous section we cited the most liberal instruction sent by the Interior Ministry to Moscow. At the same time, this ministry was devising instructions in quite a different spirit. Horák's concerned and critical telegram of 1 April 1947, in which he reacts to these instructions, puts this in focus:

I respond to your 57865 by saying that an approach according to the instructions indicated in the supplement to your 50827 would, in my experience, mean the postponement for several months of the transport home of persons who finally, as the result of our efforts for urgent transport to the Odessa camp, have been brought out of internment which in many cases lasted for months, if not years. It would mean that my official would have to remain the whole time in Odessa, which I cannot permit because we are understaffed at the embassy. Chiefly, however, I consider it very inappropriate to ask the Soviet authorities—after we have presented interventions which were undertaken on orders from our highest levels emphasizing the political urgency of this issue—to keep these persons for such a long time in Odessa.

I therefore propose that the persons concentrated in Odessa be divided in the meaning of the intention of the Ministry of the Interior into two categories:

- (a) Czechoslovak citizens
- (b) Persons of Czech or Slovak ethnicity without Czechoslovak citizenship

Group (b) would be transported as soon as all formalities have been carried out and in the meaning of your 50827. Group (a) would be transported according to § A of the principles Z/R-3443/83-9/11-46-1 without delay. In practice it will of course come down to a question as to whether our citizens are concerned. I propose that my official be given power, after a thorough interrogation and investigation of persons, to make a preliminary decision about who should be transported to Czechoslovakia. All assistance from the Soviet authorities would be requested for this, and his approach would

be based on the experience he has gained in the course of his consular service here, observing also the rules for issuing passports, with the exception that he would not request the presentation of documents whose proof is, from the practical point of view regarding difficulties in communication, still impractical. My official would advise the persons interrogated that their data will be screened and that anyone who lies their way into the Czechoslovak Republic will be punished and imprisoned. The screening would always take place once they were concentrated in Odessa for the transport. I know that the proposed solution is not ideal. However, I would maintain that if one is taking a conscientious approach, it is from the point of view of practicality the only reliable one. I would decidedly not want to keep people for long in Odessa. It would mean that in the eyes of Soviets we do not care about them, and would threaten the speedy liberation from internment of all those who are still there.³⁶¹

Czechoslovak diplomats frequently repeated the argument that the Czechoslovak government was experiencing growing internal political difficulties as a result of the delayed repatriation of internees. That was clearly true, but why would this fact be used as an argument in negotiations with the Soviet representatives? It was because the Czechoslovak players were trying to indicate that the failure to solve the deportation issue spoiled the illusion about the Soviet Union and damaged Czechoslovak–Soviet friendship. The Czechoslovak postwar establishment tried to present the Soviet Union to Czechs and Slovaks in the best light. In the interests of cultivating friendship many darker sides of the Soviet regime, which members of the Czechoslovak government must have known about, were ignored, forgiven or even hidden. To some measure, this tactic helped the smooth incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. We could rightly suppose that if the Czechoslovak representatives had paid less attention to the wishes of the Soviet Union and had instead tried to take the issue of the deportation to an international platform, they would have made much more significant progress toward resolving this issue.

From 1946 onwards the Slovak Action Committee (Slovenský akčný výbor, SAV) tried to draw the attention of the international community to the deportations. SAV was made up of a part of the Slovak émigré community under the leadership of Ferdinand Ďurčanský. In June 1947 SAV published a memorandum in the United States, addressed to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and sent 500 letters to various diplomats and leading personalities.³⁶² However, Ďurčanský's initiatives in exile had no chance of winning international support after World War II. He had been too compromised by his involvement in Hlinka's Slovak People's Party and by his support of the pro-Hitler President of the Slovak Republic Jozef Tiso, which lasted up to the last months of the war.

In 1948 František Polák, who himself spent many years in the Gulag and subsequently emigrated to the West, made an energetic attempt to inform the world about the Gulag and to achieve international condemnation of the forced labor camps in the Soviet Union and in countries of the Soviet bloc. Like many others, Polák was sentenced to the Gulag when, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia, he fled east to Poland, joined the emerging Czechoslovak military divisions, and fell into the hands of the Soviets during the Red Army's advance into Poland in September 1939. He was imprisoned in Norilsk until the beginning of 1942, when he was released to join the Czechoslovak Army which had formed in Buzuluk as an adjunct to the Red Army. However, he was captured again by the Soviet authorities the same year and again sentenced to the Gulag. His five-year punishment in the Unzhlag camp in the Kirov region expired in 1947, when he succeeded in returning to Czechoslovakia. In emigration, first in West Germany and from 1951 in the United States, he was involved in considerable activity—writing articles, lecturing, and winning support with the aim of suing the Soviet Union at the United Nations. He was supported primarily by Willard Thorp, deputy secretary of state under President Harry Truman and the holder of a number of important offices in the United States at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, and by the US ambassador to the UN, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Polák tried especially to arouse the interest of the Economic and Social Council of the UN; in 1953 he was a witness for the Ad Hoc Commission on Forced Labour of the UN and the same year sued the Soviet Union and its satellites in connection with their setting up and maintaining forced labor camps. In December 1954 the General Assembly condemned forced labor. František Polák invested immense energy in unmasking the Gulag and stimulating the most important political institutions of international society to take steps. He regarded the outcome of his endeavors as disappointing, because he judged the condemnation to be too general, and had hoped that the Soviet Union and its satellites would be specifically challenged to abolish the forced labor camps immediately. However, František Polák's initiative was very valuable. He was the only Czechoslovak who succeeded in presenting the issue of the Gulag to a broad international forum and who tried to gain the widest and most influential support.³⁶³

Unfortunately, the Czechoslovak side did not make use of all the possibilities that might have been effective in repatriating the internees. At the time when Czechoslovakia was still a democratic state, it failed to cooperate with other states whose civilians had likewise been abducted by the Soviet Union, or to use broader diplomatic platforms to put pressure

on the Soviet authorities. Instead of that, it tried to solve everything itself “as considerately as possible” toward the Soviet Union. It is strange that non-Communist Czechoslovak diplomats should have behaved in such a way, considering they had a reasonable understanding of the machinery of the Soviet Union, and harbored no illusions about it. It seems Czechoslovakia did not want to lose its position as a Soviet ally in the eyes of outsiders by acknowledging the deportations, which were viewed by the Soviet Union as justified interventions against people who had collaborated with the Nazi regime and committed crimes against the Soviet Union. Czechoslovakia tried in this way to solve the issue of deportation “under wraps.” On 12 May 1947, Horák sent the following telegram to the Foreign Ministry in Prague:³⁶⁴

According to private information from the French embassy here, the Vatican asked the French ambassador in the Papal seat to investigate through the embassy the fate of those Slovaks who were captured by orders of the Red Army after the liberation of Slovakia and transferred to the Soviet Union, and of whom nothing has been heard. Catroux decided not to put an official question and wanted only to ascertain indirectly what is true about the matter. He therefore chose the path of a private communication at a personal level from Charpentier to Kašpárek. Kašpárek replied that if a general question is not accompanied by exact data, he cannot give specific information and only said that the persons who were captured by organs of the Red Army in connection with military operations during and after the liberation of our country were released at our request, and that now there are only imperceptible remnants on the territory of the [Soviet] Union which are sent to the Czechoslovak Republic as soon as their Czechoslovak citizenship has been confirmed. I originally wanted from loyalty to inform Vyshinsky, whom I will see today, of the interest shown in the matter by the Papal seat. I will not, however, do so, because I do not consider it appropriate to give superfluous information that some of our citizens (the Vatican has lists) thought it appropriate to ask a subject who is, according to international law, a foreigner for help, and because it concerns very confidential information. Please let me know if you agree with my approach.

Clementis reacted to Horák’s telegram on 16 May.³⁶⁵ Horák had above all to ask Vyshinsky urgently for the release of the interned Slovaks to be speeded up. Clementis writes additionally: “Once again, several Germans and Hungarians were returned to Slovakia. Refuse their repatriation.”

Clementis did not object to mentioning the Vatican’s interest to Vyshinsky—it is possible that Vyshinsky knew of it anyhow, and that is why Clementis gave Horák the following instruction: “You could just drop a word about the interest shown by the Vatican and Catroux in an unobtrusive way, in connection with the press campaign the reactionary Slovak press is carrying on in America.”

On 19 May 1947, Horák was received by Vyshinsky and proceeded according to Clementis's instructions. Horák reported back:³⁶⁶

I urgently requested Vyshinsky to help us speed up the release of the interned Slovaks. I advised him of the press campaign of the Slovak reactionary press in America and linked to this a mention of the Vatican's intrigues, just in a general way of course, and in connection with the whole orientation of reactionary circles.

However, the Soviet bosses had heard more than enough "repeated urgent requests." Czechoslovak diplomacy did not risk making more emphatic use of pressure from Western Europe and the United States. Vyshinsky's report of the same meeting does not register any urgency regarding Horák's request. He noted only that Horák had informed him of a hostile campaign the Vatican and the American press were waging against Czechoslovakia, and that he (Vyshinsky) had promised him that he would "take an interest in it."³⁶⁷

The Czechoslovak side was always on the alert as to how the repatriation of Czechs and Slovaks was proceeding in comparison with the repatriation of Germans and Hungarians. There are among the archival documents many notes from Jan Masaryk and Vladimír Clementis criticizing the fact that Hungarians were being favored in repatriation. Even though Czechoslovak politicians tried to win the support of the Soviet Union in sorting out the relationship with the Hungarians according to its ideas, especially where the transfer of the Hungarian population out of Slovakia was concerned, to their unwelcome surprise the Soviet Union was not of much help, as it decided not to get involved in the matter. The Hungarians were in the eyes of the Czechoslovak politicians the inheritors of Austria-Hungary, the latent danger of the restoration of the Habsburgs, participants in the mutilation of Czechoslovakia after Munich and allies of Hitler's Germany, that is, a nation behaving in a treacherous and hostile way toward Czechoslovakia. For the Soviet Union, however, Hungary was part of the Soviet sphere of influence within which the Soviets did not intend to suffer any internal squabbles. The Soviet bloc had to be integrated, unanimous and unified.

On 24 May 1947, Horák received a telegram from Prague signed by Lípa and Masaryk, instructing him that he had to intervene immediately for all Czechs and Slovaks detained and imprisoned in the USSR, but that he had to wait for instructions by telegram. Why did they suddenly send this instruction, when four days earlier Horák had visited Golubev, and the day before Vyshinsky? Horák had not only intervened in this sense but moreover discussed with Golubev specific steps concerning repatriation.

The telegram Horák now received clearly emphasized ethnicity—all Czechs and Slovaks. It was thus a reaction to reports in the newspapers in Czechoslovakia coming from Budapest that Molotov had given the Hungarian ambassador in Moscow a note that the Soviet government would release all Hungarian prisoners immediately.³⁶⁸ The Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry had already had enough experience with similar notes. How many times had Horák been promised in a similar spirit, how many positive assurances had been uttered—in this chapter alone we could find quotations from quite a few. The true march of repatriation, however, had its own dynamic, which did not depend too much on notes and proclamations. The Czechoslovak side was very sensitive where the repatriation of other citizens, primarily Hungarians, was concerned—we could even say jealous.

The next day Counselor Jiří Kašpárek sent a long telegram to the Foreign Ministry,³⁶⁹ in which he informed it of what he had learned from the note handed over in Moscow. The Czechoslovak diplomats immediately became intensely active in ascertaining more details and Counselor Kašpárek even met his Hungarian counterpart. He wrote:

Counselor Horváth of the Hungarian Legation conveyed to me in the course of a private conversation, and confidentially regarding the note you wrote about the following: the note in question is the answer of the Soviet government to a request sent in the form of a personal letter by Rákosi to Stalin. It was delivered on 14 May to Horváth who was at that time chargé d'affaires. The Soviet government announces that by September this year it will release from prisoner-of-war camps 100,000 former Hungarian soldiers. After receiving the note, Horváth visited General Lieutenant Golubev, plenipotentiary of the government in matters of repatriation, in order to negotiate the details. They agreed that the releases would begin as soon as possible and that the prisoners would be handed over to the Hungarian authorities in Focșani and Szigetvár. Horváth took the opportunity of this visit to ask when the Hungarian government can expect the release of the other prisoners. Golubev was unable to answer. Horváth had the impression that apart from the 220,000 to 230,000 prisoners released since the end of the war and the 100,000 who would now be released, there would not be so many Hungarian citizens still left alive in Soviet hands. He assumed the others had died. He did not, however, know how many it might be. Horváth considered that the willingness of the Soviet government to release the Hungarian prisoners was a political act intended in the first place as support for the Hungarian left-wing movement. I await your further instructions.

The Czechoslovak Governmental Delegation in Moscow, July 1947

The first half of July 1947 was a decisive period for the maintenance of democracy in Czechoslovakia, even though the final blow did not fall until February 1948. The Cabinet decided on 7 July 1947 to send observers to the European Economic Conference in Paris, which was due to meet in five days' time on 12 July and which was to discuss the Marshall Plan. On 9 July a Czechoslovak government delegation led by Klement Gottwald left for Moscow, returning on 12 July. On arriving in Moscow Gottwald's delegation discussed "the essence of the Marshall Plan" with the result that on 10 July Czechoslovakia canceled its participation. This was the notorious and frequently quoted governmental visit to Moscow when the Czechoslovaks' dramatic phone call to Prague ordered the government to renounce Czechoslovakia's participation in the Marshall Plan. Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk delivered on his return the legendary statement that he went to Moscow as the foreign minister of a sovereign state and returned as Stalin's lackey. In Moscow the expansion of mutual economic relations was also discussed, the closing of a long-term trade agreement, and about help for drought-stricken Czechoslovakia.

Also on the negotiating table in Moscow was the issue of the deported and interned Czechoslovak citizens. The large number of persons who had still not returned home from the Soviet Union and the information that came to light thanks to those persons already repatriated was causing a serious political problem at home, so that however unwelcome it was to Gottwald and Clementis, they had to present the issue. On 11 July Gottwald gave the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov, a memorandum, summarizing the problem in the spirit we have noted, for example, in Horák's memoranda and in the standpoints of democratically oriented officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It can thus be seen that the memorandum did not reflect the true state of affairs in Czechoslovakia—the fact that with increasing frequency the selective approach was being used.

The memorandum stated:

From November 1944 to May 1945, that is, during the liberation of Czechoslovakia, Soviet military organs captured a number of Czechoslovak citizens on Czechoslovakian territory. These were then sent to the Soviet Union, where most of them have been up to now. This question concerns about 2,000 persons, most of them of Slovak ethnicity, and alongside that a smaller number of Czechoslovak citizens of Czech and Russian ethnicity, and also a certain number of persons of Russian ethnicity but not

citizenship who have lived for more than twenty years in the Czechoslovak Republic and are linked by family bonds with the local population.

The fact that these persons have still not returned has been misused and is still misused in domestic politics, especially in Slovakia, as well as having become an object of political comment and attacks against Czechoslovakia from abroad.

Transport to Czechoslovakia, which has already started, could be speeded up if the four main camps in which Czechoslovak citizens are now interned were evacuated. They are the following camps:

1. The prisoner-of-war camp Yenakievo in the Stalino region, Donbas
2. North Ossetia region, Nuzal camp
3. Mordovskaya Autonomous Republic, Potma camp
4. Sverdlovsk region, Yegorshino, Altavay camp

Apart from these, up to now the following groups can be found in the Soviet Union:

Prisoners of war from the former Slovak Army.

Female Soviet citizens—The wives of Czechoslovak citizens. This question concerns female Soviet citizens who married members of General Svoboda's army during the war. Requests from their husbands for them to receive travel permits were handed by the embassy of the Czechoslovak Republic to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, as were lists of these women. Their husbands are for the most part active officers of the Czechoslovak Army who also devoted themselves to cultural and educational work in the army, which raises the political urgency of the travel permits for these wives.

Soviet citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity. After the end of the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs living in the USSR, there remained a relatively small number of citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity who create in part small islands and in part live at some distance from each other. Many of them took part in the struggles for the liberation of the Republic as members of General Svoboda's army.³⁷⁰

The official reply to this Czechoslovak memorandum arrived on 8 September 1947, that is, two months later. The Soviet ambassador in Prague, Zorin, gave it to State Secretary Vladimír Clementis. Borek informed the embassy in Moscow about the handing over of the Soviet memorandum, but he did not do so immediately—the telegram was not sent until 12 September. Borek wrote only in brief that according to the Soviet memorandum, the Soviet government had ascertained altogether 1,500 interned persons and prisoners of war of Czech and Slovak ethnicity on the territory of the USSR. They would be handed over in the usual way through Odessa.³⁷¹ We can only admire the fact that, following Gottwald's memorandum, such a nice round number of prisoners and internees was found

so quickly; the number is considerably different from that on which the Soviet side had been insisting not so much earlier.

On 22 July 1947 Golubev conveyed to Counselor Kašpárek as “preliminary and, in short, confidential information” that “in response to the repeated Czechoslovak interventions the Soviet organs had proceeded to a resolute action whereby the release would be prepared of our citizens interned in the Soviet Union and prisoners of war.”

Kašpárek may have felt he was witnessing a paranoid performance when Golubev delivered as confidential information this standard unspecific phrase heard by Czechoslovak diplomats numerous times since the end of World War II. It had moreover been preceded by the visit of the Czechoslovak government delegation and the handing over of a note from Prime Minister Klement Gottwald on the matter of the internees, so this secrecy was particularly illogical. However, this time Golubev added something extra. He said that the action was very advanced and that he (Golubev) counted on it that very soon 1,500 persons would be brought together. As soon as that happened, he was prepared to offer the Czechoslovak embassy officially the usual screening and decision making concerning who would be transported to Czechoslovakia.³⁷²

Horák Strives for an Ending to Repatriation by the End of 1947 and Interministerial Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Autumn 1947

In September 1947 several telegrams were exchanged between the Foreign Ministry and the embassy in Moscow which tried to clarify the optimistically sounding news about large transports of repatriates. On 26 September, Lípa from the 5th Department of the Foreign Ministry asked about an alleged transport of 15,000 repatriates (sic), who according to the Commissariat of the Interior were to leave the USSR for Czechoslovakia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no information about any transport, let alone such a big one; the Ministry of the Interior likewise knew nothing about it, not even where this information came from, but reminded the embassy in Moscow that in every case only properly screened persons were to be repatriated. As Lípa wrote: “The Ministry of the Interior wants to guard against a flood of unwanted elements, especially Germans and Hungarians.”

The mysterious information about a transport of 15,000 was immediately checked by Kašpárek at the MID with the head of the 4th European Department Alexandrov. However, he easily clarified that this was a mis-

take, because the MID admitted only that it knew about 1,500 interned Czechoslovak citizens. The figure had acquired an extra zero in transmission and the number of interned had become the number of repatriated.³⁷³

On 22 November 1947, Ambassador Horák called on Golubev. Horák had in mind to ask officially and with emphasis for the repatriations to be finished by the end of the year. Golubev answered that he was unable to give any guarantee. There followed a number of arguments in which Golubev expanded on how strenuously and with what good will the Soviet Union was working in this matter. All the Soviet organs had had instructions to send interned Czechs and Slovaks to Odessa, i.e., Luisdorf. Golubev said that further repatriates were arriving at Luisdorf only exceptionally, as though he wanted to indicate that the Soviet organs, in spite of all their efforts, could not find any more Czechs and Slovaks. Nevertheless, there were already eighty-two people in the camp. We know of course that this was a very deceptive picture. In November 1947 there were still hundreds of deported Czechoslovak citizens in the camps of the Soviet Gulag and the Soviet authorities were not making any great efforts to find them. It would have been sufficient to give an instruction to the camps in Donbas in the Stalino region (Yunkom, for example) or in the Caucasus to Nuzalag, Sadon and Vladikavkaz, and the stream of repatriates to Czechoslovakia would immediately multiply many times. Horák had the feeling that the Soviet side was delaying the process of repatriation; however, Golubev correctly pointed out that the Czechoslovak side was also slowing things down by its screening of the repatriates in Luisdorf. Horák specifically mentioned that the second secretary of the embassy, Šulc (Schulz), was going to Odessa the next week and that he must have foundations for screening from Prague, or otherwise he would have to decide on the spot.³⁷⁴

There was another shift in the approach to the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens in November 1947—however, the change was on the part of the Czechoslovak decision makers, not the Soviet authorities. On 21 November 1947, a consultation took place in the Foreign Ministry between representatives of the Foreign, Interior and Defense Ministries, who discussed the organization of the return of Czechoslovak citizens from the Soviet Union. The practice of the Foreign Ministry was subjected to sharp criticism by the representatives of Interior and Defense. They considered the screening of repatriates before their return by the official of the embassy in Moscow to be moderate and formal, and asked that the Czechoslovak side made better use of these opportunities to get rid of unwanted persons. I will devote more attention to this discussion in the chapter about screenings

and transports. Here I will mention only that this consultation represented another marked shift in the direction of selective repatriation, another diminishing of the influence of those who set store on the return of all Czechoslovak citizens, and an incontestable demonstration of the growing influence of the Communists in central Czechoslovak institutions.

Until that time, the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens interned in the Soviet Union came under Department II/1, which was a unit of the Political Department. On 8 September 1947, however, the memorandum from the Soviet government—which we already looked at and which indicated the intention of the Soviet government to release all Czechoslovak citizens from internment—was handed over. It provided an impulse to declare that the whole issue had lost its political nature and become only an “administrative and transportation problem.” From the point of view of Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, perhaps a Soviet memorandum which expressed an intention to release all interned Czechoslovak citizens may give an impression that politics disappeared from the issue of repatriation, but this was just an illusion. The repatriations were in any case a burning political issue on the Czechoslovak domestic policy scene. In contrast with the originally declared principles of the unconditional return of all deported and interned Czechoslovak citizens, vehemently backed by the Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow Professor Horák and Vladimír Outrata in Prague, for example, the selective approach now became more apparent. The Interior Ministry (controlled by the Communists) was mainly responsible for this, but such an attitude was noted even in Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, whose distaste for Hungarians and Germans derived from the Munich trauma of the Beneš government.

In the end it was the decision of Vladimír Clementis as to whether the organization of the return of the Czechoslovak nationals from the USSR should remain in the competence of the Political 2nd Department, or whether it should be transferred as an issue of administration and transport to the competence of the 5th Department, to which repatriation and reemigration generally belonged. Clementis decided that “the agenda for organizing the return of Czechoslovak nationals from the USSR would belong in future to the competency of the 5th Department” and mentioned that attention would be devoted primarily to Slovaks, who should be the first to be repatriated.

On 24 November, the agenda of the repatriation of the internees from the USSR was transferred to the 5th Department, which at that time was led by Odon Pára. It was decided at the same time that Věra Ballingová would be transferred to this Department to take care of administration and

transport. The shift of the agenda was made toward the end of 1947, but not completely, because on 17 January 1948 the 5th Department stated that the documents were still being handed over. Ballingová, however, had already taken up her new position.

II. SCREENINGS AND TRANSPORTS

1. The Repatriation Camp in Luisdorf near Odessa

1947: The Soviet Union Accelerates Repatriations

The repatriation camp Luisdorf near Odessa—sometimes also called by its Russian name Luzanovka—was put into operation in the beginning of 1947. We can infer that from the fact that the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the embassy in Moscow on 5 March 1947 that the first two repatriation transports dispatched “from Odessa” will be taken over in Chop by the Košice branch of the security services.³⁷⁵ Prisoners from various forced labor camps had been transported to Luisdorf some time before that and we know that before they were actually sent to Czechoslovakia, the repatriates had been subjected to a lengthy and certainly nerve-racking screening and approval procedure lasting from weeks to months.

On 28 March 1947, the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow received a telegram signed by Vlastimil Borek and Jan Masaryk. The contents of the telegram were very sensitive. The Foreign Ministry asked the ambassador whether the instructions of the Ministry of the Interior regarding repatriations (ref. nr. 50827/II-1) “are feasible with regard to the possibly fastest implementation of transfer of internees of Czech and Slovak ethnicity from Odessa to the Czechoslovak Republic.”

If the ambassador’s reply was negative, that is, if it was not possible to implement the Interior Ministry’s instructions with regard to rapid repatriation, the ambassador was supposed to inform the Foreign Ministry about “presumptive problems substantiated by current practice,” so that the ministry could intervene with the Ministry of the Interior.³⁷⁶ According to the Slovak historian Ladislav Boroň, “compared with the ‘disorganized repatriations’ of 1945 (basically repatriations organized by the

USSR), in the following years 1946 and 1947—as a result of selection carried out by the Czech side—the number of repatriates dropped.”³⁷⁷ In my opinion, the opposite is true: repatriations moved forward in spring 1947 and the whole action gathered pace.

On 20 May 1947 Ambassador Horák visited Golubev,³⁷⁸ who promised to do all he could to speed up the repatriations. He also informed Horák that there were another 255 persons in Luisdorf, “allegedly Czechoslovak nationals,” the list of which he would send to Horák within three days. Horák should arrange to send an official who would screen them. In his report for Prague Horák reported on the screening procedure, which he “consulted thoroughly” with Golubev. They agreed it was not possible to station a screening official in Odessa or in the camp itself permanently, and he must therefore go whenever a larger group of detainees was gathered in the camp. It seems they considered, or at least discussed, the possibility that someone would commute from Czechoslovakia to the camp to do the screening. They ruled this possibility out—the connection from Chop was apparently too bad, and Golubev insisted that the official could only travel to the camp from Moscow. Golubev agreed with sending Šulc, who proved competent during his first screening mission. He also suggested that he could recommend to the MID the issuing of a visa to a Czechoslovak official who would come to Moscow. Golubev further stressed that it was essential that the transports were properly taken over in Chop, i.e., that they were taken over as a whole, not by screening individual persons.

Obviously, when the Soviets decided to release certain persons, they wanted to move them from their territory as fast as possible. Their prolonged stay in the relatively comfortable camp in Luisdorf or further screening on the border was not in the Soviet Union’s interest. The Soviets were interested in the labor of those detained in labor camps—it was very difficult to get them out of these, and the Soviets did not rush to release them. However, once the repatriation process was under way, the Soviets had no reason not to send the concerned persons across the border as quickly as possible.

The Czechoslovak side, however, began to show the opposite attitude. It seems that as long as the deported persons were in labor camps, the Czechoslovak authorities appealed intensively for their release. However, as soon as the cases became clearer and individualized, the Czechoslovak side began to look for convenient ways to get rid of certain individuals, and to reconsider at the last moment whom to repatriate and whom not. This attitude only began to take shape in the summer of 1947 and gathered

pace in the second half of the year. At this time, when Horák reported about his meeting with Golubev, he was asking headquarters whether he should send Šulc to Odessa again. He would be happy to do that, because in his opinion this was “the fastest and by far the cheapest way.” There is an interesting remark made by Golubev and reported by Horák to Prague. According to the Soviet official there was only a small number of persons who were to be sent from Luisdorf to Czechoslovakia. However, there were apparently 255 people in the camp, which is not exactly a small number. It is possible that Golubev supposed that most of them would not be cleared for repatriation by the Czechoslovak side. This is, however, only our guess.

Emil Šulc (Schulz) in Luisdorf, May 1947, and Ludovít Mičátek in Luisdorf, June 1947

The first official of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow to be sent to screen repatriates in the Luisdorf camp in May 1947 was Second Secretary Emil Šulc. He was subsequently sent to this camp several times and became a sort of “screening specialist.” Both the Czechoslovak and the Soviet authorities were satisfied with his work. Šulc was not the only official of the embassy in Moscow in charge of screenings. Other officials involved were Miloš Krno, Václav Vaško and Ludovít Mičátek. Reports about the situation in Luisdorf, written by these officials or by Ambassador Horák, are valuable sources; I therefore cite them in this chapter in full, although there are certain overlaps between individual reports.

*Ambassador J. Horák's Report for Headquarters about Second Secretary Šulc's Trip to Luisdorf*³⁷⁹

Moscow, 7 May 1947

Ref. no. 375/47

Re: Repatriation of prisoners and detainees from the USSR

Re: ref. no. 86606/II-1/47

Immediately

For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague

Please find enclosed the report of Second Secretary Emil Šulc about his trip to Odessa and the lists mentioned in the report. The embassy adds quickly (in order to be able to send the letter by courier) this information.

Before his departure Mr. Šulc was instructed to proceed according to the intentions of the Ministry of the Interior as communicated to our office as per written or telegraphed orders of the Ministry of the Interior, and to proceed rigorously. At the same time he was reminded that we have an eminent political interest in the intense and energetic implementation of actions aiming at the liberation of Czechoslovak citizens

from internment and captivity and that these should not be jeopardized by procedures which might not be correctly understood by the Soviet authorities or could endanger the success of our effort.

General Golubev told Mr. Šulc, and it was repeated to him by the commander of the camp upon his arrival in Odessa, that the persons assembled in Luisdorf may be screened by us and may be refused entry to Czechoslovakia, but they cannot stay in the camp for long. Persons whose cases are not decided will be put to work again and dispersed into the labor camps they came from.

Naturally, none of the 208 persons interned in the camp had documents that would indisputably prove their Czechoslovak citizenship. However, it was not possible for Mr. Šulc to refuse repatriation as this would destroy any chance for the persons assembled in the camp to return and probably also the chances of those waiting in labor camps to be transferred to the assembly camp (which would happen if the Soviet authorities got the impression from the results of the screening that we are not interested in the persons they offer us). The above-mentioned official of the embassy therefore screened individual detainees and prisoners to the best of his knowledge on the basis of the available material (lists provided by the ministry, information provided by the screened persons and information from the Soviet authorities). As a result, he approved the repatriation of 120 persons and turned down 88. After he returned, it turned out that another four persons could have been included [in the repatriation] on the basis of the ministry's instruction ref. no. 151. 333/II-1/46 sent by telegram. This shows that Mr. Šulc proceeded with necessary strictness.

The embassy urges the competent authorities to proceed with the review of List no. 2 as soon as possible and urges the ministry to inform [us] about the decision by telegram. It is also advisable to sort out the question of the entry of Soviet officers on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic. We also request, referring to the above-stated reasons, that the issue be solved as quickly as possible.

[signed] Ambassador

*Emil Šulc's Report about His Mission to Odessa, 29 April–5 May 1947*³⁸⁰

My trip to Odessa was approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directive no. 39.032/47. The purpose of my trip was to visit the Luisdorf camp and to screen repatriates there.

I left Moscow on 29 April this year at 12.40 a.m. and arrived in Odessa on 1 May at 6.30 a.m. I was delayed in Odessa for technical reasons for two days and arrived in the camp on 3 May. I was accompanied from Moscow by Major Gruzyev, an officer of the Department for Repatriation of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

The camp is in the town of Luisdorf, a former German settlement, approximately 10 km from Odessa, on the Black Sea coast. The commander of the camp is Col. Domazhirov. However, Col. Domazhirov lives and works in Odessa and only the second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel Lensky, is present in the camp. Prisoners of war and civilian internees of different nationalities destined for repatriation are being assembled in this camp. Food and accommodation are relatively better than in other camps and all inmates are exempt from work duty.

At the time of my visit there were 200 persons in the camp who claimed to be Czechoslovak citizens. After agreement with the camp command, I proceeded with the

screening, interviewing each person individually. During the interview I inquired in particular about the date and place of birth, last permanent address in the Czechoslovak Republic, ethnicity claimed before 1938 and during the occupation, the reason for serving in an enemy army, ethnicity of the parents or wife. Because of the large number of persons and technical difficulties, it was impossible for me to check in each individual case whether the person's name is on the list or to inquire at the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. Besides that, the lists provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs include only civilian internees and partly prisoners of war from the Těšín region. I also relied on the information provided to me by the Soviet officers. My main criterion was knowledge of the Czech or Slovak language. I paid particular attention to persons from Hungarian and German border areas who claimed to be Slovak or Czech and also to Czechs from the former Protectorate who served in the German Army. I asked all of them whether they have news from Czechoslovakia and whether their relatives were not evacuated from the Czechoslovak Republic. Most of them do not have any news because correspondence with Czechoslovakia is forbidden. I made all of them aware of the Presidential Decree of 10 August 1945,³⁸¹ which stripped Germans and Hungarians of Czechoslovak citizenship and I emphasized that persons repatriated on the basis of false statements will be punished. I authorized the repatriation of 120 persons—see the enclosed List no. 1—and held back 9 . . . persons for further screening³⁸²—see List no. 2. Four of these persons were subsequently cleared for repatriation after their screening at the embassy—see nos. 121–124. Persons cleared for repatriation will be sent from Odessa to Chop on 7 May this year.

During my visit to the camp, the camp commander Col. Domazhirov complained about problems with the takeover of repatriation transports in Chop. Apparently, there was no one to take over the latest transport of Slovak officers. Lieutenant Colonel Svoboda, who is present in Chop, refused to take over the transport, arguing that he is charged with taking over the transports of Czechs from Volhynia. In the end, the transport was taken over by some corporal. The Soviet authorities therefore demand that (1) a Czechoslovak officer is assigned to take over these transports, as the transports are accompanied by a Soviet officer all the way to Chop; (2) Soviet officers accompanying the transport (names will be supplied) be authorized to enter Czechoslovak territory (as far as Košice) in case there is no one in Chop to take over the transport.

From conversations with the Soviet officers in the camp I got the impression that they would appreciate receiving Czechoslovak military honors. I requested from the camp commander Col. Domazhirov a list of officers who, in his opinion, should be awarded military honors. Before my departure he gave me this list:

1. Lt. Col. Klavdiy Nikolaevich Lensky
2. Maj. Sergey Yakovlevich Shpak
3. Maj. Tikhon Ivanovich Shcherbakov
4. Capt. Nikolay Gavrilovich Shcherbak
5. Capt. Ivan Dmitrievich Letvinenko

Obviously, it would also be appropriate to award military honors to Col. N.A. Domazhirov. My work in the camp took me two days. I returned to Moscow by plane on 5 May this year.

[signed] E. Šulc

In the first ten days of June 1947, the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow sent another diplomat to Odessa, First Secretary Ludovít Mičátek. His report on his mission could not be found in the Archive of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There was probably a major debate about repatriations at the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow between Counselor Jiří Kašpárek and First Secretary Miloš Krno (a Communist). We can only speculate whether the screening was the issue. Kašpárek reported his conversation with Krno to Prague and on 10 June received the following answer from Černý and Masaryk: "If you establish with certainty that they are Slovaks, even if they were officers of the Hungarian Army, if they come from Czechoslovak territory, they should be repatriated."³⁸³

According to Kašpárek's handwritten note on the telegram, Mičátek in Odessa was immediately informed by phone about this decision. We therefore know that Mičátek was in Odessa at the time and we can also see how different and changing were the positions regarding the eligibility for repatriation. However, ethnicity or nationality was a priority. Even if the person concerned was an officer of the Hungarian Army, if it was certain that he was ethnically Slovak, he should be repatriated without further ado. However, if the person—whose family might have lived in Slovakia for generations—claimed Hungarian ethnicity, Czechoslovakia was not interested in him, and he did not even have to be an officer of the Hungarian Army.

Counselor Kašpárek's Urgent Requests and Golubev's Data

On 6 August 1947 Counselor Jiří Kašpárek met with Gen. Golubev to demand the release and transport of the remaining Czechoslovak citizens. Golubev reacted as usual with startling numbers. Kašpárek reported to headquarters that Golubev said: "According to Soviet sources, from the end of the war up to this point 45,967 persons, 9,759 of them prisoners of war, have been sent to Czechoslovakia."³⁸⁴

If Kašpárek reported Golubev's information correctly, 36,208 internees who were not prisoners of war, i.e., civilian internees, were repatriated. This is an extraordinarily high number, which did not figure in any Soviet source to date. The Soviets have always maintained that there were only several tens or hundreds of civilian internees. On the other hand, 9,759 prisoners of war is too small a number, considering the number of the Slovak soldiers who were taken prisoners on the territory of the USSR. Further on in the conversation Golubev talks about Luisdorf. His data regarding this camp are much more realistic. Golubev told Kašpárek that at the beginning of

August there were 351 persons in Luisdorf who claimed to be Czechoslovak citizens. Of these, 211 were still waiting for the results of their screening by the Czechoslovak authorities. There were 140 new inmates, yet to be screened. Golubev also said that those cleared for repatriation during the previous visit of an embassy official—apparently 113 persons—were already being transported to Czechoslovakia. The seventy-two persons whose repatriation the Czechoslovak authorities had turned down were returned to the interior of the USSR. From the complete list of 226 internees in whose interest the embassy intervened, twenty-five had already been found in Odessa, according to Golubev, and would be sent home. In conclusion, Golubev urged Kašpárek that the embassy should send an official to Odessa again, ideally Šulc, and that the Czechoslovak side should speed up the screening process in Luisdorf.

“Speeding up the transports of detainees, internees and other citizens of ours here depends on vacating the Odessa camp,” Kašpárek wrote to Prague. A few days later Kašpárek telegraphed to Prague that he agreed with Šmelc on how to proceed with the screening of the persons in Odessa. According to the resulting instruction prenegotiated with the official of the Ministry of the Interior Toman, the screening official in Moscow “has discretionary powers to proceed with the screening to his best knowledge in such a manner that the repatriation is not delayed from our side.”³⁸⁵

Process of Screening and Approval

The process of approving persons for repatriation was by no means a mere formality. It might seem from the reports of the officials who were screening repatriates in Luisdorf that they cleared anyone they possibly could and that in this respect they proceeded in a very liberal and forthcoming way. However, the tone of some of these reports, for instance Krno’s report which I cite on the following pages, reveals that the authorization process was very subjective, often depending on chance, and that the official could not possibly, in the short time available, responsibly assess the repatriate without background information from Prague. Considering the complicated ethnic make-up of Czechoslovakia before World War II and the fact that a number of ordinary people from the border regions spoke dialects, to decide about the fate of a man on the basis of whether and how he speaks Czech or Slovak, must have been sheer voluntarism. However, a much worse danger for the repatriates was the decision making of the Ministry of the Interior. There was a relatively high number of negative

decisions. This is apparent from a list sent from the Ministry of the Interior to the embassy in Moscow on 19 July 1947. The repatriation of fifty-nine persons on the list was turned down by the Ministry of the Interior and only one person was cleared. The list does not state the address of the persons whose repatriation was turned down and we do not know from which parts of Czechoslovakia they came. There are just names and dates of birth on the list. The youngest person on this list was born in 1927, most were forty to forty-five years old, and the oldest fifty-two. It is difficult to guess the person's ethnicity from his name. We know that many ethnic Czechs had and still have German names. Most of the names on the list look German. However, there are also typically Czech names, e.g., Jan Živný, František Běhůnek, Jan Janko, Bedřich Vojtek, František Chotek and František Pecka.³⁸⁶

Telegrams with lists of names, requesting screening of these persons and communicating a positive or negative decision, were flying back and forth between the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior in Prague and the Commissariat of the Interior in Bratislava. On 25 April 1947 the embassy in Moscow requested—via the Foreign Ministry—the Ministry of the Interior's position regarding the repatriation of the prisoners of war in Odessa and sent a list of their names.³⁸⁷ At the end of May 1947 the Foreign Ministry sent a telegram with a list of twenty-one names via the Ministry of the Interior to the Commissariat of the Interior in Bratislava, requesting their screening “according to Decree no. Z/R-9576/305–28/11–46 of 28 November 1946 of the Ministry of the Interior” and asking that the result be delivered directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁸⁸ On 26 August 1947 the Ministry of the Interior requested from the Commissariat of the Interior the screening of seventy persons, regarding their state and national reliability. Most of them were apparently prisoners of war from the former Hungarian and German armies. The Foreign Ministry requests that for the sake of fast repatriation the inquiry be made by phone at the appropriate local national committees.³⁸⁹

Let us imagine a sudden, unexpected phone call from an official of the Commissariat of the Interior, to a local national committee in a Slovak small town or village (that is, if they had a phone at all). The official asks about the national and state reliability of a man from this town, from whom they had perhaps had no news for several years and whose family thinks he was killed on the Eastern front. The phone call is taken by someone who might not even know the person, perhaps does not have a good relationship with him, perhaps just tries to be as critical and meticu-

lous as possible or might not realize the whole context of the situation. One sentence or word may be enough to ruin forever the opportunity for a man to return who has spent years in the Gulag and is now waiting in Luisdorf for repatriation. This may not have happened, but it cannot be ruled out, because the possibility existed.

On 27 September 1947 the Ministry of the Interior requested from the Slovak Commissariat of the Interior the screening of ten persons "for immediate repatriation"; the result to be delivered directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The same request was made on 11 October, this time regarding eleven names.³⁹⁰ The author had the opportunity to talk to one of the deported whose repatriation was rejected because of an administrative mistake on the Czechoslovak side. He said that this was perhaps the worst thing that happened to him in the Gulag. It made him feel hopeless and desperate. There is more on this case in the chapter dealing with the circumstances of the deportations from Slovakia.

Lists of persons held back in Luisdorf for screening by the Ministry of the Interior show that civilian deportees and soldiers of Hungarian, Slovak and German armies were often put on the same list.³⁹¹ I assume that even though they were prisoners of war, in Luisdorf there were, despite their relatively high numbers, mainly individual cases, because more numerous groups of repatriated German and Hungarian soldiers did not pass through Luisdorf. Although we are above all concerned with civilian deportees, we must bear this in mind, to be aware of the context. The number of soldiers who were not cleared for repatriation was relatively high. On one list, there were around hundred soldiers of the German Army whose repatriation was turned down, while the number of persons detained in Luisdorf did not reach more than several hundred persons at the most and was usually much lower.

For example, on 27 October 1947, 232 soldiers of the Slovak Army (at first 207 and later another 25) and 100 soldiers of the German Army were cleared for repatriation. At the same time 42 persons were turned down, as reported by the Ministry of the Interior in Prague to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a week earlier, on 20 October.³⁹² On 29 October 1947, the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow reported in a telegram to Prague the names of persons who were cleared for repatriation. There were 30 soldiers of the former Slovak Army, 16 soldiers of the former Hungarian Army, and 42 "others." How is it possible that two days earlier, according to the list from 27 October, repatriation of a much higher number of persons had been approved—it should have been 232 in total? How is it possible that now (29 October) 42 "others" are listed as cleared for repatria-

tion, while the same number of persons were turned down according to the decision of the Ministry of the Interior? There is also an undated list of 42 persons cleared for repatriation—they were supposedly “former German Army and labor force.”³⁹³ These questions have yet to be solved. There is also a telegram from 29 October 1947 with a further 52 persons to be screened by the Ministry of the Interior.³⁹⁴ Let us make the picture even more complicated: on 31 October 1947 the Ministry of the Interior sent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a list of 353 persons who were cleared for repatriation and 40 persons who were turned down; however, this is not a completely different group of repatriates. Comparing the names, we find that these are the people from the list from 27 October.³⁹⁵ It is clear that the lists are not completely identical and that there are additional or missing names on some lists. I mention this example to show how imprecise the whole approval process was, often depending on chance, and how decisions regarding some persons could change within few days. This approval process, which the Czechoslovak side considered a privilege magnanimously given to them by the Soviet side, certainly caused a great number of human tragedies.

The screening of persons in Luisdorf was gradually becoming a real burden. In August 1947 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs writes to the embassy in Moscow that they informed the Ministry of the Interior:

about the difficulties arising as a result of the lengthy screening of persons on the basis of your lists [i.e., the lists made in Odessa by an employee of the embassy and sent to Prague for screening by the Ministry of the Interior]. The embassy shall send a list of 140 internees who are already in Odessa, so that the Ministry of the Interior can begin to screen them.³⁹⁶

On 22 August 1947 the embassy received a telegram from Clementis³⁹⁷ approving the agreed procedure. He confirmed that internees who could with reasonable certainty be considered Czechoslovak citizens of Slovak ethnicity should be transferred from Odessa to Czechoslovakia without further ado. In case of prisoners of war the existing procedures were to be applied. Clementis further demanded that the number of persons whose transfer to Czechoslovakia depended on the approval of the Ministry of the Interior or the Commissariat of the Interior be kept to “the bare minimum.” Screening of this group should be limited to questions regarding ethnicity or state citizenship. Clementis further wrote that to make this task easier, Dr. Krno should be involved in the screening of Slovaks.

Preparations for Screening of Repatriates at the End of August 1947

Counselor Kašpárek replied to Clementis the following day. He first needed a decision on 211 persons who were waiting for repatriation in Odessa. He wrote that it was the holiday season and he did not have enough staff to send Šulc and Krno to Odessa at the same time. He was therefore sending only Krno, who was learning Šulc's agenda very fast. It seemed that the repatriates in Odessa would have to wait a bit longer for the decision in any case. Krno wanted to go on holiday on 6 September and it did not seem that he would accomplish his mission to Odessa before then. He could not leave for Odessa anyway—wrote Kašpárek—before he obtained the decision from the Ministry of the Interior regarding the group awaiting its repatriation in Odessa.³⁹⁸

Clementis did not want to approve such a long delay. On 25 August, he sent a telegram to Kašpárek, saying that Šulc should deal with the agenda of the internees. Krno should only help with the screening of Slovaks whose ethnicity was unclear. Clementis further wrote that if it was necessary, Kašpárek should recall Evžen Malý from his holiday.³⁹⁹ In the end, Šulc was to continue his work on the screening of repatriates in Odessa.

We can only guess why Kašpárek understood from Clementis's first telegram of 22 August that he was supposed to transfer the whole agenda from Šulc to Krno. Šulc had already proved competent and the Soviet officials—for example, Golubev—had indicated on various occasions that they were happy working with him. Why did Kašpárek prefer to wait for Krno's return from holiday instead of sending Šulc to Odessa on his own? It is likely that Krno's position and his connection with Clementis were so strong that as soon as his name appeared in the instructions—although he was only supposed to help with problematic Slovak cases—it was interpreted as a hint to give him as much room as possible. It seems that the embassy did indeed try to take the repatriation agenda away from Šulc and hand it over to Krno. We can get an idea of Krno's attitude toward the screening of repatriates from his memoirs, which we quote in this chapter. There are also testimonies of some of the deported, according to which Krno played a negative role in the process of repatriation. It was described as such by František Čambal from Spišská Nová Ves in an interview conducted by the author of this book. Vladimír Bystrov and Petr Juščák also took a critical view of Krno's attitude toward the deported.⁴⁰⁰

The next day, 26 August 1947, Counselor Kašpárek met Golubev and reported the meeting as follows:⁴⁰¹

I was received by Golubev today and he told me solemnly that the work on transporting the rest of our citizens to Czechoslovakia as fast as possible continues successfully. Apart from 211 persons—regarding which they are awaiting our decision as soon as possible—about 250 persons will have been assembled in Odessa today or tomorrow. There are roughly 150 other persons on their way to the camp. We can count on further successive transports.

I thanked Golubev for the great helpfulness of the Soviet government and I also thanked him and his colleagues personally. Bearing in mind your 173.357 and 178.311,⁴⁰² I agreed with him that I will send Šulc and Krno to Odessa as soon as the last transport arrives there. There will be around 600 persons in Odessa (which includes 211 from before). I am not going to wait for the Ministry of the Interior's decision, and Šulc and Krno will set out upon Golubev's request. However, they would leave the group of 211 on hold until further instructions from the Ministry of the Interior. Regarding the rest, they will proceed according to your 173.357. It would be good though, if the decision from the Ministry of the Interior arrived as soon as possible.

Kašpárek apparently decided to let the 211 persons wait in Luisdorf and not repatriate them, should the decision by the Ministry of the Interior not arrive on time. However, on 2 September Jan Masaryk personally intervened in this matter. He sent an instruction to Moscow to include the above-mentioned 211 persons in the repatriation screening, should the Ministry of the Interior's decision not arrive before Šulc's and Krno's departure for Odessa. If there were Slovaks among these 211 detainees, they were to be repatriated without waiting for the decision of the Ministry of the Interior and their screening was to be limited only to the question of ethnicity or citizenship. Masaryk demands that lists of positively and negatively screened persons be sent immediately to headquarters and emphasizes, as Clementis before, that it is necessary "to take care of vacating Odessa in the first place." This again confirms that the Soviets were not interested in the persons held in Odessa (i.e., Luisdorf). These people were to be repatriated as quickly as possible or returned to labor camps, from where there was mostly no return.

On 27 August two telegrams crossed. The embassy received a telegram from Prague, signed by Horák and Lípa. Ambassador Jiří Horák was in Prague and operated for a few days "from the other side" from headquarters at the Territorial Department. That is why Šulc's and Krno's mission was decided in Moscow by Kašpárek, who was in charge of the embassy on behalf of Horák. Kašpárek was instructed by this telegram to intervene immediately with Golubev on behalf of "an outstanding patriot, judge, Slovak: address: Ivan Macucha, Sadonskiy rudnik, lager [camp] 228, bolnitsa [hospital], Severnaya Osetiya [North Ossetia], SSSR [USSR]." Someone very influential probably intervened on Ivan Macucha's behalf,

if his case was dealt with in this way. Ivan Macucha was allegedly in danger of death (however, all detainees were close to death), and if he was in hospital, his condition was probably critical. In referring to Macucha's condition the author of the telegram—probably the linguist Horák—used the Latin expression *in periculo mortis*, interestingly garbled by the typist. Nevertheless, Macucha's case ended well, because there is Kašpárek's handwritten note on the telegram dated 6 September, saying "repatriation allowed in Odessa." If Macucha made it alive to Odessa, he was probably fine, although it was not sure. We know that many repatriates did not survive the transport home.⁴⁰³

Kašpárek reports to Prague on the same day that the day before he gave Golubev copies of another batch of diplomatic notes regarding captured and interned persons that had already been sent to MID. Golubev apparently promised Kašpárek that he would make sure they were processed as soon as possible.⁴⁰⁴

This telegram requires more attention. Foreign missions operating in the Soviet Union were not allowed to address Soviet institutions directly and had to make all submissions and personal contacts exclusively through the MID. It was the MID's duty to pass the agenda on to the competent Soviet bodies and institutions. This, of course, also applied to the agenda of the internees. All correspondence between the Czechoslovak and the Soviet side regarding internees went first to the MID. However, the Soviet ministry apparatus was not exactly flexible in forwarding these materials to Golubev. Because no internee could be repatriated without the approval of Golubev's authority, I understand the Czechoslovak embassy's decision to give him copies of all diplomatic notes which had been sent to the MID as an effort to speed things up and, most importantly, to do something against the usual delaying tactics of the MID. However, we cannot assume that there was any way to circumvent the MID or that we should regard Golubev as a man devoted to the case of repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens. Golubev cooperated closely with the MID and if he flaunted his friendship with Czechoslovakia, initiated during the war, this was no advantage in Stalinist times.

Krno and Šulc in Luisdorf, September 1947

In the end, Krno joined Šulc on his mission to Luisdorf and deferred his holiday. It was no ordinary holiday and Miloš Krno and his wife would have hardly been able to make it before his journey to Odessa. They flew to Belgrade, spent a few days there as guests of the Communist poet Petr

Jilemnický, whom Krno had befriended earlier, and who was working there at the time as secretary of the Panslavic Committee. Soon after, Jilemnický joined the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow as cultural attaché. It is possible that Krno helped him to get the post. After visiting Jilemnický in Belgrade, Krno and his wife spent their holiday at the Adriatic Sea and visited Warsaw on their way back.

Krno and Šulc were quickly finished with the screening in Odessa. According to the report, they left Moscow on 4 September and came back on 8 September. Even though they flew to Odessa, it is surprising that they had so little time for their mission. In my opinion, it was simply not possible to handle such a large number of people in such a short time, even if many of them were not considered problematic cases, and Krno and Šulc did not need to interview them. However, it seems that there were many “problematic” cases. Many detainees in Luisdorf were Hungarians from Slovakia or Germans from the former Czechoslovakia. How could Krno make a decision during an interview lasting just a few minutes? There must have been a lot of subjectivity, chance and tragic misunderstandings in these so-called screenings.

Another question arises when we look at the exchange of telegrams between Kašpárek and Clementis from 22 to 25 August 1947. Why did the state secretary have to deal with the question of which official of the embassy should go to Odessa? Why was it up to Clementis to decide whether Evžen Malý, third secretary at the embassy, should be recalled from his holiday? We may find the reason in Krno’s memoirs: “A new employee arrived, Third Secretary Evžen Malý, a pedantic worker, an expert in the consular agenda. He confided to me that he is a Party member. Anna Strnadová arrived at the same time and we founded a Party cell immediately.”⁴⁰⁵ This was in spite of the fact that the internal regulations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs strictly prohibited any political party activity in an embassy.

*Report on Dr. Krno and Mr. Šulc’s Mission to Odessa, 4–8 September 1947*⁴⁰⁶

Re: no. 835/47

Dr. Miloš Krno and Mr. Emil Šulc were authorized by Telegram no. 178.311 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to go to Odessa to conduct the screening of persons assembled for repatriation to Czechoslovakia. They went on 4 September 1947 and returned on 8 September this year, traveling by plane.

They screened 676 persons in total. 105 persons were cleared for repatriation, sixty-five persons were held back for further screening.

The screening of prisoners and internees in the Luisdorf camp no. 186 proceeded, when possible, according to Ministry of the Interior Guideline Z/R-3643/83-9/11-66-1 and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directive no. 86.606/II-1/47. Some of the prisoners and internees (mainly Slovaks) had already received documents from Czechoslovakia confirming their national reliability; concerning others, the embassy was instructed by a directive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to allow their repatriation. These persons were not subject to further detailed screening. The screening of the rest proceeded according to the above-mentioned directives.

A letter sent from the Czechoslovak Republic this year was considered an indirect proof of citizenship, or proof that the family members had not been transferred from the Czechoslovak Republic. These letters often served as an indirect proof that the person is not considered in the Czechoslovak Republic as German or Hungarian. Prisoners of war from the Hlučín and Těšín regions had a better position regarding their right to repatriation along the lines of the above-mentioned directions of the Ministry of the Interior. A particularly strong emphasis was put in all cases on a knowledge of the official state languages. Also taken into account was the origin of the parents or wives of the screened persons, whether they went to schools in which the Czech or Slovak language was used and in what spirit their household is run. Both officials proceeded according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directive no. 181.894/47 indicating that the final decision about repatriation or return to the camps is to be taken on the spot and that a minimum number of cases should be submitted for further screening by the Ministry of the Interior.

Many screened persons claimed that they had received letters from Czechoslovakia but that these letters had been confiscated upon their release from the original camps. The Soviet officers present confirmed this fact.

The camp commander promised that persons cleared for repatriation would be sent to Chop in the coming days. He also complained that on the Czechoslovak side, officers charged with taking over of the transports in Chop are never present on time, and transports have to wait for a long time. Persons whose repatriation was turned down would be sent back to prison camps. Persons whose repatriation is to be decided by the Ministry of the Interior would stay in Luisdorf camp until their case is decided.

[signed] E. Šulc, Krno

Superficiality and Possible Misuse of the Repatriation Screenings

Arrival in the Luisdorf repatriation camp raised an intense feeling of hope in many detainees. There was a direct way home from there—but not necessarily. The Soviet side mentioned on several occasions that the repatriates were supposed to recover in this camp, so that they return home in good condition. Apparently, after all the hardships they had been through, some detainees considered Luisdorf, a former German spa resort on the Black Sea coast, a “recreation center.” However, for those who did not pass the screenings, the return to labor camps must have come as a terrible shock, leaving them hopeless and desperate. There was no small number

of these cases. On 8 September 1947, after the return of Šulc and Krno from their mission to Odessa, Kašpárek reported to Prague that they allowed the repatriation of 526 persons and turned down 101—that is, they turned down almost 1 in 5 persons, and thus sent them back to the mines of Donbas, to Siberia, to beyond the Arctic Circle, or anywhere they were subsequently sent by GUPVI.

Krno and Šulc went to Odessa on 4 September and came back on 8 September. Let us make the best possible estimate, and suppose that they left Moscow in the morning and the same day worked in Odessa for six hours—from lunchtime until 6.00 p.m., or from 2.00 p.m. until 8.00 p.m. Suppose they worked another three days, from 5 to 7 September, for twelve hours a day—without a meal, without breaks, so they did not lose a single minute. Maybe on the day of their departure from Luisdorf, 8 September, they worked another six hours, and returned to Moscow on the same day. Given this unrealistically high pace of work, they would each work for 48 hours. Imagine that each of them worked completely on his own, that they did not consult each other, nor interview the same detainee together. That gives us 96 hours of screening. The report states that they approved the repatriation of 526 persons, turned down 101 and left sixty-six cases to be decided by the Ministry of the Interior. From this we can deduce that they were also making decisions about the people they did authorize for repatriation, i.e., they talked to them, and certainly there were problematic cases among them. This therefore was not the group of detainees that had been authorized for repatriation en bloc on the basis of the list sent from Prague. We can also assume that the sixty-six undecided cases took more time, because even after the screening the officials could not decide whether to allow the repatriation or not. So, given the unrealistic twelve-hour working day without a break and given that Krno and Šulc talked to all 693 detainees, they must have on average screened at least seven persons every hour. Thus in theory they would have had on average slightly more than eight minutes for one person. However, that does not take into account the taking of notes, consulting their materials, the coming and going of the detainees, etc. We know that Krno was supposed to work on problematic cases only, which would raise Šulc's share of interviewees. If we imagine that maybe they did not talk to everyone, that there was a certain number of people in Luisdorf who had already been cleared for repatriation solely on the basis of written documents, even then they would at least have had to look at these documents. In the least problematic cases, the estimated eight minutes would have been enough to find the person in the list, tick the name and let the Soviet side sign the repa-

triation document. However, the diplomats did not spend all their time in Luisdorf talking to detainees. They spent some time solving various questions with the Soviet commanders of the camp, they were also entertained, and shown Odessa and its surroundings. Even if there were no trips to the surroundings during this particular visit, the diplomats certainly did not work at the pace that I took as a basis for my estimate. Thus they probably had much less time than eight minutes for each detainee.

Summing up, we get a simple equation. The fate of the people waiting in Luisdorf and hoping for repatriation was decided on the grounds of superficial examination, because there was not enough time to talk properly to the persons concerned. This brings up the question as to whether there was any point in this screening. The Soviets had showed a clear effort to send the repatriates from Luisdorf back home as soon as possible, because they had “used” them enough in the camps. However, in my opinion, the Czechoslovak government misused the screening to get rid of members of minorities they were not interested in, solely on the basis of language and ethnicity established in a routine interview. The repatriation screenings thus became to a certain extent an instrument in creating a one- or two-nation-state cleansed of minorities.

Although Krno describes his mission to Odessa in his memoirs, he does not date it and he does not write that he was accompanied by a colleague. Either he was building his own “memorial” in his memoirs, or he writes about another mission to Odessa, when he went on his own and for which no other documentation has yet been found. I suspect the first option is the more likely.

Krno describes in his memoirs his mission to Luisdorf.⁴⁰⁷

I was commissioned with a mission in Odessa. There was a prison camp on the sea-coast not far from the town of Luisdorf. Among the Wehrmacht soldiers who stopped fighting in time and did not bite the dust, many claimed to be Czech or Slovak. I had discretionary powers from our Ministry of Foreign Affairs to screen those who claimed to be our citizens. If they did not lose their citizenship and were not informers of the Gestapo, they could return home from captivity early, while the German and Hungarian Fascists had to carry on helping to rebuild the Soviet cities they had destroyed.

Naturally, the detainees had no papers, and there were many who claimed to be our citizens. Thus, I often had to use tricks.

A detainee might speak Czech well and claim to be a Czech who had had to join the Wehrmacht because there was compulsory call-up in Silesia. I asked him, even though I did not have any evidence, why he collaborated with the Gestapo. The guy confessed: his wife wanted to get rich quickly and the Germans were not stingy.

There were also many prisoners of war from the Hungarian Army who claimed to be Czechoslovak citizens from the occupied territory. A Gypsy from Horthy’s army

also came claiming to be a Czechoslovak. It was difficult to establish which side of the border he comes from because he forgot the name of his native town, as he traveled from village to village. So I asked him to sing his favorite song. As he sang a Slovak song, he went with the transport to Slovakia.

There was also a Lusatian, a teacher from a village near Berlin. I proposed to the camp commander that we should send him to Prague, from there he can go further, because he is not a Fascist, he is a Slav. The commander agreed and the Lusatian teacher did not have to rebuild Odessa any longer.

It really is a small world—there was also a man from Lupča among the detainees. He did not enlist in Svoboda's army while in camp and got stuck there with the Germans. We also sent him home before the others.

There are opinions, although not frequent, that the release of the deported civilians took place mainly because the relatives of the deported fought hard for their return. The pressure they exercised on authorities—the ministries, commissions, courts, Office of the President of the Republic, and the Soviet missions—supposedly resulted in the gradual release of the deported, which took place from the end of 1945 to 1955.

It was brought about not just by the courage and persistence of the relatives but also by dramatic events such as the escape of several internees who managed to get to the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. One of them was Ján Tomľan. First secretary of the embassy Miloš Krno, who met several of the escapees, informed the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs about their fate. The Soviet authorities in the end allowed the visit of some camps and subsequently proceeded with the release of larger groups of deported persons. In 1947 M. Krno, together with the second secretary of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow Šulc, visited the Luisdorf prison camp near Odessa, where, according to Soviet data, 3,000 "Czechoslovaks" were held.⁴⁰⁸

I cannot agree with this explanation of how the repatriation in the end got under way. None of the above-quoted reasons, supposedly crucial for the repatriation of the deported, could have had any influence on the Soviet side. I am convinced that the deported were released because their bad health made them useless for work, because of the need to lower the number of internees with regard to the deadline to release all prisoners of war and, eventually, because of the changes in domestic politics in the USSR after Stalin's death.

In the autumn of 1947 the effort to repatriate detained Czechoslovak citizens continued undiminished. Ambassador Horák tried very hard to get all interned Czechoslovak citizens home by the end of the year and stepped up his efforts in the second half of the year. Horák must have seen that a substantial change in the balance of political powers was imminent. He would have noticed signals clearly pointing in this direction. Not only

was the influence of the Communists in Czechoslovak key institutions growing; we should also not forget that in the summer of the same year Czechoslovakia turned down participation in the Marshall Plan and on 21–27 September 1947 Cominform was founded in Szklarska Poręba in Poland. Possibly because of these circumstances Horák steadily urged the Soviet side to finish the repatriations by the end of 1947. On 11 October 1947 Ambassador Horák reported to the Foreign Ministry that he met with General Basilov, temporarily deputizing for General Golubev, and insisted that “prisoners and internees be assembled in Odessa with the greatest intensity, so that the whole action would be finished by the end of the year.” Basilov promised to help him, and because it turned out that there were another 160 persons waiting for repatriation in Odessa, they agreed that Šulc should go to Odessa as soon as possible—on 16 October.

Emil Šulc in Luisdorf, October 1947

In Odessa, Šulc was supposed to proceed according to the existing instructions. However, there were still detainees left in Odessa by Krno and Šulc during the previous screening in the beginning of September as open cases to be decided by the Ministry of the Interior. Horák pressed for an immediate answer from the ministry, so that Šulc could close these cases during his next visit to Odessa.⁴⁰⁹ The answer to this urgent request was sent from Prague on 14 October and probably reached Šulc still in Moscow, but did not help him with the “leftover” cases. Vlastimil Borek passed on a message from the Ministry of the Interior saying that the ministry could not decide about these cases before 16 October. Šulc was instructed to screen only the new group of 160 detainees, proceeding as usual. The unresolved cases from September were to be left open until further notice. Šulc received an advance of 2,500 rubles for his journey, and his departure to Odessa was delayed by one day, in the hope that he might still get the decision from the Ministry of the Interior regarding the sixty-six open cases from September.⁴¹⁰

*Report on the Mission of the Second Secretary of the Embassy E. Šulc to Odessa, 17–25 October 1947*⁴¹¹

The mission of E. Šulc to Odessa for the purpose of screening persons claiming repatriation to the Czechoslovak Republic was authorized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Order] no. 213.047/I-1/47.

I set off on 17 October at 7.00 a.m. and arrived in Odessa on 19 October at 10.00 a.m. I was accompanied by Major Teodorovich from the Administration of Repatria-

tion Affairs of the Soviet government. I began my work in camp no. 186 in Luisdorf on 20 October in the morning. There were 487 persons in total, including those, who had been held back for further screening by the Ministry of the Interior during our last visit with Dr. Krno in September this year. I proceeded with the screening in the same way as before, according to Ministry of the Interior Guideline no. Z/R-3643/83-9/11-46-1 and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directive no. 86.606/II-1/47 and the guidelines agreed with Mr. Šmelc, see here no. 712/D/47.

Václav Vaško remembers Robert Schmelz, who “introduced [him] sarcastically to the Soviet situation” in 1945 and who later, in the beginning of the 1950s worked as the head of the Soviet Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague. Vaško joined this department after he had been recalled from Moscow, and Schmelz assigned him to the agenda of German reparations.⁴¹² (“Šmelc” mentioned in the documents of the Foreign Ministry and “Schmelz” remembered by Václav Vaško are the same person.) Counselor Kašpárek informed the headquarters about the guidelines agreed with Šmelc on August 1947:

I agreed with Šmelc our further strategy for screening the persons in Odessa. Šmelc said in his instructions that the official who will go to Odessa, has discretionary powers to proceed with the screenings to his best knowledge and in such manner that the repatriations are not delayed from our side.

At that point there were 211 detainees in Odessa who were not cleared for repatriation and who were awaiting the decision of the Ministry of the Interior. It seems that Šmelc was well connected at the Ministry of the Interior and thus could afford to take this quite liberal stance at a time when there were clear signs of an effort not only to check the principle of the right of repatriation for everyone, but also to shift the decision making from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of the Interior. Šmelc had the “blessing” of a certain Toman from the Ministry of the Interior, to whom he refers.

I considered as an indirect proof of Czechoslovak citizenship any letter sent by a person's closest relatives (parents, siblings) from the Czechoslovak Republic by the end of 1946 and in 1947. Unfortunately, even this indirect and far from sufficient proof of Czechoslovak citizenship was incomplete, because many screened persons claimed that they had received letters but that these had been confiscated before their transfer to Odessa by the MVD authorities. The present Soviet officers confirmed that personal letters are indeed sometimes taken away from the repatriates (see here 835 /Dův/47 [confidential]).

During the screenings I found out that the selection of persons who are being assembled in Odessa for the purpose of their repatriation to the Czechoslovak Republic

is on the Soviet side much more thorough than was the case during the assembly of the first transports. The percentage of Germans is much lower than during my first visit in May this year. On the other hand, the number of interned Slovaks grew significantly.

The Soviet authorities pay much greater attention to the selection of repatriates and therefore ask that the percentage of persons held for screening and whose repatriation is turned down is kept to minimum. In many cases in which I did not want to allow repatriation, the Soviet officers asked me nevertheless to allow them to return to the Czechoslovak Republic, saying that they know the person and that turning down the person's repatriation will result in a repeated screening of this person by the authorities of the Ministry of the Interior of the USSR and the person will be sent back to Odessa for repatriation. On the grounds of this request I allowed repatriation, particularly when I found out that there are indeed persons in the camp whose repatriation I had already turned down before. Based on my original decision, these people were sent from Odessa back to some center, where they were again screened by the authorities of the Ministry of the Interior of the USSR (as the Soviet officers said) and returned to Odessa with the instruction to be repatriated. In these cases, where I allowed repatriation on the request of the Soviet authorities, I put a note of this fact in the list.

The commander of the camp asked me again to urge the Czechoslovak authorities to speed up the screening of persons who were held back for this purpose in the camp. During my work he asked me several times to minimize the number of persons held back for screening.

I would appreciate it if the screening by the Ministry of the Interior would, if possible, be made faster, as this would also make easier the work of the official dealing with the screening in Odessa. If the screening is faster, it will be possible to leave larger number of problematic cases in Odessa without protests from the Soviet authorities.

I returned to Moscow on 25 October this year.

The transport left Odessa on 29 October this year.

[signed] E. Šulc

On the day Šulc returned to Moscow he sent a telegram to the Foreign Ministry in which he summarized the results of his screenings. He allowed repatriation of 353 persons and turned down forty-three Germans. There were eighty-nine persons still to be screened, who stayed in the camp awaiting the decision of the Ministry of the Interior, including those he put on hold on 4 September and whose cases had not yet been decided by the Ministry of the Interior. Šulc writes that the Soviet authorities strongly urge that the camp is vacated and requests a quick answer. Šulc sent his report to Prague on 30 October.⁴¹³

If one of the main criteria was the knowledge of Czech or Slovak language, or letters from Czechoslovakia, how can the list of persons held back in Luisdorf for screening, made by Šulc during his trip to Odessa with Krno on 4–8 September 1947, be explained? In this list of thirty-five names, held by the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague,

there is a note to twenty-three persons that they speak Czech well or very well, seven had recent letters from Czechoslovakia, one of them had letters from his wife written in Czech, three had parents in Czechoslovakia, one worked in the Czech military archive before the war and one was a member of the Social Democratic Party. We do not know whether these men in the end managed to return to Czechoslovakia. I believe that the approval process, when the fate of an individual was often decided during a very short interview with an official of the embassy, was a very dubious procedure. The officials performing the screening were given incredible power over the fate of their fellow men.

Czechoslovak Interministerial Meeting, 21 November 1947

On 21 November 1947 representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense held a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the agenda was the organization of the return of Czechoslovak citizens from the Soviet Union. Representatives of the Ministries of the Interior and Defense expressed the opinion that the current organization of repatriations is not satisfactory and challenged the Foreign Ministry's practice, in particular the screening of repatriates by an official of the embassy in Moscow. The representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense, however, criticized the Foreign Ministry from a completely opposite position to that we would expect. In their view, the screening was not strict enough; the Czechoslovak state should have made better use of the opportunity to get rid of dozens or hundreds of undesirable persons. The minutes from the meeting record their position as follows:

The official of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow who is screening Czechoslovak citizens in the assembly camp in Odessa for repatriation does not have suitable facilities at hand to enable him to fulfill his task successfully. It was expected that mistakes would be made during this general and superficial screening by the official of the embassy in Moscow. However, the fact that the repatriation process would go ahead, in particular the repatriation of persons of Slovak ethnicity interned in the USSR, should have offset the potential necessary evil concerning the small percentage of undesirable persons who would be repatriated. This expectation was not fulfilled. The representative of the Ministry of the Interior said that in the last transport, from the total number of 106 persons there were 101 persons of German ethnicity, and therefore undesirable.⁴¹⁴

Although there is no concrete evidence, the question arises as to whether these 101 "undesirable" repatriates, who were probably later

transferred to Germany, were not the 101 persons whose repatriation to Czechoslovakia had been turned down by Krno and Šulc in September 1947. Šulc might have in the end nevertheless approved their repatriation. This speculation is supported only by the coincidence in the numbers, which might be just incidental. It does, however, seem that Šulc during his visit to Odessa in October 1947 did empty the camp as much as he could. There is another, undated list of 101 persons, who were cleared for repatriation. However, these were soldiers of the Hungarian Army. Whether the coincidence in numbers is no more than that, or whether we are dealing with the same, inaccurately labeled, group of repatriates, could not be established.⁴¹⁵ The minutes from the meeting continue:

Representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, in agreement with the representative of the Ministry of Defense, insisted that the instructions regarding the process of repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens from the USSR given to the official of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow should be changed.

The representative of Department II/1 pointed out that within the current framework of the organization of repatriations, from the total number of 1,500, more than 900 persons of Slovak ethnicity had already returned to Czechoslovakia. Thus, there are still 500 to 600 interned persons of Slovak ethnicity. The return of these persons from the USSR is of great political importance for Slovakia. A potential change of organization of the return of these persons could endanger the whole project. The current practice regarding repatriation strictly distinguished two categories: (1) civilians detained in the USSR, who were screened by an official of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow without previous approval by the Ministry of the Interior and (2) prisoners of war from the German or Hungarian armies, whose repatriation is requested only after the previous approval by the Ministry of the Interior. Department II/1 has no idea how it was possible that the transport mentioned by the representative of the Ministry of the Interior (101 Germans) was sent.

The representative of the Ministry of the Interior declared that in the interest of the state security he must insist on a change of the current practice. He further said that these persons of German ethnicity, should they return from the USSR, are not going to find their relatives in Czechoslovakia because the majority of them have already been transferred. It is impossible to transfer these former soldiers of the German Army to either the Soviet- or the US-occupied zone of Germany. The meeting reached the following conclusion:

The instructions given to the official of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow who is screening Czechoslovak citizens in Odessa for repatriation will be changed in the following sense:

1. From now on, he will be authorized to exclude persons from repatriation.
2. He will allow the repatriation of those on the list of persons cleared for repatriation provided by the Ministry of the Interior.
3. He will keep evidence of other persons and send the list by telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The minutes of this meeting, which was probably rather dramatic and heated, were taken by Dr. Ján Danko. Danko belonged to the group of promising young men who joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately after the war. In summer 1945 he was sent as an attaché to Moscow and returned from there to the headquarters in November 1947. In his minutes from the meeting he summarized the reasons for the above-quoted decision:

[It was] considered necessary and useful to sustain the screening official's authority to eliminate obviously undesirable persons and thus make room in the assembly camp for other Czechoslovak citizens sent there by the Soviet authorities from other internment camps, because the capacity of the assembly camp in Odessa is only 400 persons. Otherwise there would be danger of permanent overcrowding of the camp and the Soviet authorities may not be able to send Czechoslovak citizens from internment camps to the assembly center in Odessa.

This was the main reason for authorizing an official of the embassy in Moscow to exclude people from the repatriation process and thus condemn them to be sent back to labor camps. Overcrowding was indeed a serious problem in Luisdorf and the Soviet authorities were anxious that the detainees simply pass through this camp and do not stay there too long. However, the right way to avoid overcrowding of the camp would have been to send the Czechoslovak citizens home and not return them to the Gulag, which was on the conscience of the screening official from the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow.

Many people were excluded from the transports for various reasons. For example, Gejza Huňor, a Czechoslovak citizen interned in the northern Caucasus, was excluded from a repatriation transport to Luisdorf because he was a specialist electrician and the camp command decided to keep him. The embassy in Moscow should have intervened immediately to put things right. I could not find out whether Gejza Huňor eventually got back home. His brother Ľudevít, a commander of a partisan group during the Slovak National Uprising, was killed in the battle of Telgárt, aged twenty-eight. We are witnessing a tragedy that afflicted a whole family from Spišská Nová Ves.⁴¹⁶

According to Danko's notes, the Ministry of the Interior declared that they had already sent several lists of persons screened by them to the embassy in Moscow and would be sending more lists in due course. At the interdepartmental meeting on 21 November the representatives of the Ministry of the Interior strove to appear efficient and principled:

The Ministry of the Interior will swiftly check the lists sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the embassy in Moscow. The representative of the Ministry of the Interior claimed that the Ministry of the Interior had to this moment screened 4,000 [sic] persons, who are yet to return. Comparing the lists provided by the embassy in Moscow with their own files, they will be able to send their opinion on majority of the cases to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in two or three days. Other cases will be screened within one month.

As a matter of fact, the Ministry of the Interior was not so efficient. As we have seen in the case of Emil Šulc's preparations for the trip to Odessa in October 1947, the screening was far less efficient. In mid-October the Ministry of the Interior was still not able to provide Šulc with the result of their screening regarding the persons Šulc and Krno had held back in Odessa for further decision.

How did the other participants of the meeting react? Dr. Ján Danko's minutes show that Counselor Kašpárek was present at the meeting. Apparently, he came from Moscow to attend the meeting. It does not follow from Danko's minutes that Kašpárek contributed in any significant way or that he tried to argue with the officials of the Ministry of the Interior. The notes briefly mention that Kašpárek acknowledged the decision and that the Head of the 5th Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ing. Odon Pára, was asked to inform State Secretary Vladimír Clementis about the issue. He was also supposed to inform the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow officially.

Apart from Dr. Danko's minutes of the meeting, there are also minutes taken by JUDr. Bartoň.⁴¹⁷ Bartoň's minutes include a list of the officials present and give more information about the proceedings. According to Bartoň, the Ministry of the Interior was represented by Senior Counselor Dr. Jan Chudoba, Senior Counselor Dr. Jan Skořepa and junior officials J. Hráský, Šorm and Mádr, representing different departments of the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of the Interior was represented quite strongly; the Ministry of Defense, on the other hand, was represented only by Lt. Col. Dr. Gráf and the Ministry of Social Care by Dr. Václav Šatava. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was represented by Dr. Ján Danko of Department II/1, the head of the 5th Department Ing. Odon Pára, and Dr. Antonín Bartoň of the 5th Department. We know from Danko's minutes that Counselor Kašpárek from the embassy in Moscow was also there. The meeting started at 1.00 p.m. Dr. Chudoba presented the Ministry of the Interior's complaint regarding the current practice in the screening of repatriates. Apparently, 220 persons from the last transport stayed in Slovakia and 105 persons were sent to Czech Lands. Out of these 105, alleg-

edly 101 were “objectionable regarding their political and national reliability” and it was therefore necessary “to put these 101 persons, former members of SS and NSDAP, under arrest until their transfer to Germany.” We gather from Bartoň’s minutes that Counselor Kašpárek also spoke at the meeting, described the problems of the screening in Odessa and stressed that other states were not even granted the possibility of such screening.

In my opinion this “privilege” was almost detrimental. As we have seen, the Soviet side would have probably repatriated all Czechoslovak citizens as soon as they arrived in Odessa, had the Czechoslovak government not intervened in the repatriation process with their screening. Kašpárek tried to take the edge off the criticism, pointing out that the embassy official sent to Odessa to handle the screening is doing everything he possibly can. Similarly, Dr. Danko pointed out that 900 persons of Slovak ethnicity from the total number of 1,500 had already been repatriated and another 500 to 600 Slovaks whose return was of great importance for domestic politics were likely to be repatriated. According to Bartoň’s notes, Danko supported a change in the screening procedure and emphasized that it was impossible to accept prisoners of war whose families had been transferred to Germany. The reasons for this were allegedly problems with their subsequent transfer. Dr. Gráf of the Ministry of Defense emphasized the ministry’s interest in the return of the former soldiers of Svoboda’s army and their family members, many of whom had not yet returned. Bartoň’s summary of the conclusions of the meeting is identical with Danko’s minutes. The notes from the meeting were sent to the secretariat of the government and all ministerial departments represented at the meeting.

Horák’s Intervention with Golubev, November 1947: National Criteria, Rumors and Confused Information

Meanwhile in Moscow, on 22 November 1947, Horák met Golubev again and requested that the repatriation be concluded by the end of the year. This time, however, Golubev replied that he could not guarantee it. Apparently, there were another eighty-two people in Odessa, although new arrivals were few and far between. He reassured Horák that all the Soviet authorities had instructions to send interned Czechs and Slovaks to Odessa.⁴¹⁸ Horák received a telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was to inform Golubev of its contents.⁴¹⁹ In the telegram, Lípa points out that according to information from the Ministry of the Interior, the

USSR is releasing prisoners of war of Hungarian ethnicity whose return was not requested by the Slovak Commissariat of the Interior and whose return is "undesirable, because these persons are objectionable with regards to their state and national reliability."

Ambassador Horák was to alert the appropriate Soviet authorities to the "undesirable practice" of persons of Slovak ethnicity not being released despite the recommendation of the Commissariat of the Interior and approval by the Ministry of the Interior. There was indeed a widespread rumor in Czechoslovakia at that time that mostly Hungarians and only very few Slovaks were returning home; Slovak officers were allegedly almost never repatriated at all. There was criticism from the highest positions in the government and from families who complained in their letters that even a year after the intervention, the family member had neither returned from the Soviet Union nor did they have any news from him.⁴²⁰ In an atmosphere of anti-Hungarian emotion and from an understandable human desire to see their loved ones soon again, people jealously followed the course of repatriation and tended to have a distorted perception of the situation and to exaggerate.

On 23 December 1947, Horák met Golubev again regarding the internees. Golubev told him that there was a group of persons (apparently 113) in Odessa awaiting repatriation screening. Among them were fifty-one persons awaiting decisions from the Ministry of the Interior. Horák quickly sent a telegram to Prague, asking for the Ministry of the Interior's decision, particularly regarding the fifty-one persons who had been held in the camp since the previous screening.⁴²¹ As we shall see, the decision about this group in Luisdorf was to take many more months, lasting until August 1948.

The Soviets' effort to dispatch the internees from Luisdorf, which grew in the course of 1947, intensified in 1948. We can see this from a telegram sent by Lípa from the Soviet Territorial Department of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 20 February 1948.⁴²² He communicates the Ministry of the Interior's position regarding telegrams in which the embassy was informed about the pressure from the Soviet side to vacate the camp in Luisdorf:

Should the Soviet authorities press for the closing down of the assembly center in Luisdorf in such a way that your office would not manage to investigate the state and national reliability of the interned persons and keep up with the dispatching of transports, the Ministry of the Interior prefers that these persons be transferred directly to Germany rather than be admitted to Czechoslovak territory without previous screening. Persons transferred from Luisdorf will always have an opportunity to apply for re-

patriation from Germany. On the other hand, if these persons were already on Czechoslovak territory, it would be extremely difficult to transfer them to Germany because the quota for transfers is already set.

There was clearly a growing nervousness regarding the transports. The promises of the Soviet government that all Czechoslovak internees will be released and the approaching end of the year certainly played their role. After the promising pronouncements of the Soviet authorities in mid-1947, toward the end of the year the repatriations were becoming more complicated again. We already mentioned the rumor about a transport of 15,000 repatriates. On 4 December 1947, Horák met A.M. Alexandrov at the MID, to ask him about a further unspecified transport of Slovaks. However, Alexandrov categorically denied any preparations for a special transport and added that he could not imagine how such a rumor could emerge at all. The news apparently spread from the parliamentary delegation visiting Moscow at the time. Alexandrov did not know how this could have happened because he neither talked to the members of the delegation, nor were the delegates received by the Soviet minister of foreign affairs, and Alexandrov ruled out that the members of the Czechoslovak parliamentary delegation could have got this information from Shverník or Kuznetsov. Horák had to report to Prague that this was surely a mistake.⁴²³

2. The Repatriation Camp Sighet in Romania

Screening of Slovaks and Hungarians in Sighet and the Ethnicity Criterion

One of the main repatriation camps was in northern Romania in a region which in Romania is called Maramureș, in Hungarian Máramaros. In Czechoslovak archival documents about the repatriations after World War II this camp is regularly called Marmaros Sziget or just Sziget. This is because it was located in a massive prison fortress dating back to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the city of Sighet, called Sziget at the time the fortress had been erected.

This was a region of mixed ethnicity and language. In the twentieth century it was several times transferred from one state to another, and the names of localities had a Hungarian and a Romanian form. Very often the names were in a mixture of these languages and, especially in documents from intermediate periods, we cannot be exact about the designation politically, administratively or linguistically. Until World War I the land Máramaros and the city Marmaros-Sziget—or just Sziget, also often called Sighet—belonged for the most part to the Kingdom of Hungary. After World War I, the Treaty of Trianon attached part of Máramaros to Czechoslovakia. Romania was awarded the remaining part of the territory under the name Maramureș, including the city of Sziget/Sighet, in Romanian called Sighet Marmăției. In 1940 the Second Vienna Award attached Maramureș to Hungary, returning to it the Hungarian names Máramaros and Sziget/Sighet. After World War II, the interwar Romanian territory of Maramureș was again attached to Romania, where it remains to this day.

It was an ill-reputed camp, where tens of thousands of internees died of dysentery.⁴²⁴ On 13 August 1947, the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow—I have the impression it was Counselor Kašpárek deputizing for Ambassador Horák—approached Golubev, saying that according to information available to the embassy “the Allied monitoring committee in Bucharest does not rule out the possibility that there are Slovaks among the prisoners of war in Sighet” and recommends the Czechoslovak authorities to visit this camp and check if there are any Slovaks present. The Allied monitoring committee itself apparently had no influence on the camp command, which was in Soviet hands. The embassy therefore requested that the Czechoslovak delegate in Romania be permitted to visit the prisoner-of-war camp in Sighet.⁴²⁵

On 27 August 1947, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted a memorandum to the Soviets.⁴²⁶ They submitted it via the Soviet embassy in Prague, which was the less usual way. In most cases, the ministry used the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow for this purpose. This embassy was informed about the memorandum and instructed to intervene with the Soviet authorities concurrently.

The memorandum reacted to the allegation that persons were excluded from repatriation transports of Hungarian prisoners if they either claimed to be ethnic Slovaks and declared an interest in moving to Czechoslovakia, or said that their families in Hungary applied for repatriation. Apparently the Soviet authorities excluded these persons from the transports because they had been instructed to repatriate only Hungarians. The memorandum protests against this practice. It seems that the Soviet practice was negatively received among Czechoslovaks living in Hungary:

[I]t has a particularly negative influence on the moral of repatriates who are still in Hungary and whose relatives—because they were Hungarian citizens—are held in captivity in the USSR. In some cases persons who already applied for repatriation cancel their applications because they think if they move to Czechoslovakia, their relatives will stay in captivity.

The Foreign Ministry, again, as on 20 August, refers to the case of Jan Daniš, who was excluded from a transport of prisoners returning to Hungary because during the screening he declared that he considered himself to be Czechoslovak, and that his family had applied for repatriation to Czechoslovakia—as explained earlier in the chapter Czechoslovak–Hungarian Relationship and Repatriation on page 171. The memorandum further refers to the Soviet authorities' position from March 1946, which we discussed in the context of negotiations about repatriations in 1946. In March 1946, the Czechoslovak side requested⁴²⁷ that Hungarian prisoners of Slovak ethnicity be allowed exceptionally to return from the prisoner-of-war camps. The Soviet side replied that “the issue of captured Hungarian citizens is a matter of postwar relations between the USSR and Hungary, that is, it is not possible to treat them differently from other Hungarian prisoners.”

The Czechoslovak memorandum of 27 August 1947 concludes that:

as a result of the current practice of excluding prisoners of Slovak ethnicity from the repatriation transports of Hungarian prisoners, these persons can neither return to Czechoslovakia in regular or special transports as repatriates according to the Agree-

ment about exchange of inhabitants between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, nor to Hungary as prisoners of war, and they remain in the USSR.

In conclusion, the memorandum demands that the Soviet repatriation authorities be instructed immediately that it should not exclude from repatriation Hungarian prisoners of Slovak ethnicity or, more precisely, those who intend to resettle in Czechoslovakia or whose families intend to resettle, and to allow them to choose whether they want to be repatriated to Hungary with the transports of Hungarian prisoners or return directly to Czechoslovakia.

On 16 December 1947, Pára sent a telegram to Horák in which he pointed out that several hundred Czechoslovak citizens—prisoners who were being repatriated from the USSR—had allegedly been detained for several months in a repatriation camp in Sighet. Apparently the Soviet authorities did not allow these repatriates to go to Czechoslovakia, but they let them go to Hungary, from whence these persons left for Slovakia. Pára asked Horák to look into this issue immediately and take action. Horák sent Kašpárek to the MID to sort out the matter. Kašpárek talked to Teplov, an official of the 4th European Department. However, Teplov told him to see Golubev in this matter.⁴²⁸

Václav Vaško writes in his memoirs that Soviet officials who were dealing with Czechoslovak diplomats sometimes got their names mixed up. They confused Secretary Mičátek with Secretary Trubáček, and Danko with Vaško. It seems from Teplov's report about his conversation with the Czechoslovak diplomat that he probably mixed up Kašpárek with Mičátek.⁴²⁹ According to Teplov, Mičátek visited him on 18 December 1947 to inform him about a telegram the embassy had received from Prague. Apparently, the repatriated prisoners of war from the former Hungarian Army said that for some months there had been several hundred Czechoslovak citizens in the prisoner-of-war- and internment camp in Sighet. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged the Soviet side to speed up the repatriation of Czechoslovaks from this camp.

It seems that on 16 December 1947, the embassy received a telegram from Prague; two days later (18 December) Kašpárek (according to Horák) or Mičátek (according to Teplov) brought it to Teplov and on 19 December Teplov wrote a report about their meeting. However, it is strange that Horák and Teplov sum up the content of the telegram differently, although both refer to the prison camp in Sighet. It is possible that Teplov did not mix up Kašpárek with Mičátek and that they both visited him in short sequence, each of them with a different telegram. However,

this seems to me less likely than the possibility that Teplov mixed up the two diplomats. The differences in the respective reports about the content of the telegram could be explained by the fact that the telegram was rather long and only the part they focused on was included in the report.

On 22 December 1947, Horák reported to the ministry that he met Golubev and received information from him that a group of approximately 1,600 prisoners was sent from the prison camp in Sighet to Hungary because the Czechoslovak official who had been sent from Bucharest to screen them refused to receive them. Golubev also told Horák that another group of prisoners, roughly of the same size, was due to arrive in the camp. It is not completely clear whether in the case of this second group of repatriates Golubev was referring to the camp in Sighet or the camp in Luisdorf near Odessa. From the context, it would seem that he probably referred to the camp in Romania. Horák's account does not reveal his opinion regarding the fact that the transport was not allowed to go to Czechoslovakia and sent to Hungary instead. Whoever these repatriates were—most likely Hungarians—if the official sent by the Czechoslovak embassy in Romania did not screen them, they were certainly better off being sent to Hungary. If this had happened in Luisdorf, they would have ended up in the Gulag with no hope of leaving the Soviet Union.⁴³⁰

The Czechoslovak side paid particularly sharp and almost jealous attention to the repatriation of Hungarians from the Soviet Union. They repeatedly pointed out that Hungarian prisoners of war, whose repatriation was negotiated by the Hungarian government and whose families had already been transferred to Hungary, were illegally moving from the Soviet Union to Czechoslovakia. According to the Czechoslovak government, these Hungarians should be extradited to the Soviet Union. However, the Czechoslovak government "seeks a benevolent solution."⁴³¹

In 1948 the importance of the prison camp in Sighet as a repatriation facility for Czechoslovak citizens grew in comparison with previous years. As early as 1947 the Czechoslovak embassy in Bucharest sent an official to screen repatriates there. He did not, however, allow them to return to Czechoslovakia, and let them all be sent to Hungary. From the available sources it seems that most repatriates in Sighet were indeed of Hungarian ethnicity, mostly prisoners of war from the Hungarian Army. Did the Hungarian authorities screen Hungarian repatriates as the Czechoslovak authorities did? Did someone in Hungary decide about those in whom the Hungarian state was interested, and those it was not?

On 7 May, Vlastimil Borek from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague sent an instruction to the embassy in Moscow to ask Golubev

whether Hungarian prisoners of war of Slovak ethnicity would be also repatriated, as Golubev claimed earlier. Apparently, Prague had received a message from Budapest that prisoners of war from the USSR were returning to Hungary and the embassy should alert the Soviet side to "errors that occurred in the past regarding this issue." Borek wrote in conclusion that Golubev's answer regarding repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war of Slovak ethnicity should be sent to Prague as soon as possible, so that necessary measures could be taken.⁴³²

On 15 May 1948, Counselor Kašpárek, at that time in charge of the embassy, met Golubev to discuss this issue. Ambassador Horák had already been recalled and Bohuslav Laštovička, the first ambassador to be appointed after the Communist takeover in February 1948, had not yet arrived.

Kašpárek reported that he and Golubev had discussed the issue in detail. Golubev clearly said that Czechoslovaks' worries were at this point unfounded. He reassured Kašpárek that Czechoslovakia would be informed about all Hungarian prisoners of Slovak ethnicity who claimed Slovak ethnicity and showed interest in repatriation to Czechoslovakia. These persons would be transferred to Sighet and offered to the Czechoslovak side. Everyone accepted by Czechoslovakia would be handed over to the Czechoslovak side and the rest would be transferred to Hungary.⁴³³

Six months earlier, persons whom Czechoslovakia was not interested in, to a large extent Hungarians, were being sent back to the Gulag labor camps. In the spring of 1948 this was no longer the case, at least not for those in the prison camp in Sighet. What caused this change? I believe there were two main reasons. First, the deadline for release of all prisoners of war was approaching. The deadline was negotiated at the highest international level and it was binding for the Soviet Union. Another reason was indisputably the fact that both Czechoslovakia and Hungary were now governed by Communists and both states were members of the Soviet bloc.

The Czechoslovak Plenipotentiary in Sighet

Kašpárek reported that he and Golubev had also discussed the screening procedure "thoroughly" and Golubev agreed that the Czechoslovak side should send a plenipotentiary to Sighet to decide who should be repatriated to Czechoslovakia. The plenipotentiary should be sent to Sighet from Moscow, Bucharest or Prague. This was not actually a new position. As early as before Christmas 1947 an official of the Czechoslovak embassy in Bucharest had been present during the assembly of a repatriation transport. He did

not clear anyone for repatriation, and sent them all to Hungary. What was the point of negotiating the same issue again with the Soviet side? What was the point of again reporting to Prague that Golubev in principle agreed with the screening? What was the point of discussing whether to send a screening official to Sighet from Prague, Bucharest, or Moscow?

According to Kašpárek, it was necessary to be aware that among the Slovak prisoners there may be Czechoslovak citizens from territories temporarily annexed by Hungary. The rest would be “original” Hungarian citizens. Kašpárek points out the necessity of distinguishing between these two groups because the repatriation of the persons from the first group must be approved by the Ministry of the Interior, while “decisions about the others were delegated to us.” Kašpárek further writes that Václav Vaško, a young diplomat in charge of the repatriation agenda at the embassy in Moscow, kept exact records of prisoners of war who were Czechoslovak citizens. In Kašpárek’s opinion, if Vaško was sent to Sighet he could make perfect use of these files. The files could help him make decisions regarding the first group of repatriates because Vaško apparently kept records of the Ministry of the Interior’s decisions regarding individual internees. Regarding the second group, that is, the “original” Hungarian citizens, he would decide according to the general guidelines. We do not know, however, what general guidelines he refers to. It is unclear whether the expression “general guidelines” did not simply refer to identification of citizens of German origin.

Kašpárek also wrote that the embassy in Moscow would miss Vaško, if he were to be sent to Sighet. As an alternative, Kašpárek proposed that every time a group of Slovaks arrived in Sighet, the embassy would ask Golubev for a list of their names, including all details. The embassy would then check the decision of the Ministry of the Interior regarding repatriation in Vaško’s records. The result would be reported via Golubev to Sighet. Regarding Slovaks from the first category on the list, the embassy would ask the Ministry of the Interior for a decision. Kašpárek believed someone would have to go to Sighet anyway, to screen Slovaks who were Hungarian citizens, and because “in [our] experience Golubev’s lists tend to be inaccurate.”

Kašpárek concludes that he agreed with Golubev that the Czechoslovak plenipotentiary—whether sent from Prague, Bucharest (where the embassy did not have any screening materials) or Moscow—should be allowed into the prison camp.

According to the instruction sent to Kašpárek by Borek from Prague, the person sent to screen repatriates in Sighet should be Vaško from the

Moscow embassy.⁴³⁴ It was the most logical solution. The embassy in Bucharest had neither the necessary documents nor any experience with this kind of repatriation agenda. It is rather surprising that one of the experienced screening officials Šulc or Krno was not sent to Sighet. Regarding Kašpárek's argument that Vaško is indispensable at the embassy, Borek replied that he should do the screening as quickly as possible, and that Kašpárek should inform the ministry about the date of Vaško's journey, so that they could inform the embassy in Bucharest. However, it seems that sending Vaško to Sighet was perceived as an *ad hoc* action, because Borek added that in future the embassy should request from Golubev lists of Slovaks detained in Sighet and proceed according to Kašpárek's proposal, that is do the screening to a large extent by post.

It seems that the situation in Sighet was similar to that in Luisdorf. Hundreds or even thousands of repatriates were being assembled in the camp and it was necessary to make sure they were smoothly dispatched onward. However, there were significant changes in the situation. Large groups were being handled and—unlike what was happening in Odessa—individuals were not being excluded from transports and sent back to the Gulag. Apparently Vaško's presence in Sighet really was necessary. On 1 June Kašpárek reported to Prague that the secretary of the embassy, Miloslav Trubáček, had learned from Chebotarev of the MID that there were 3,165 Czechoslovak citizens of Hungarian ethnicity in the repatriation camp in Sighet. The MID requested a fast decision as to whether Czechoslovakia would accept these persons. Should the Czechoslovak government agree, the Soviets were ready to transfer them to Czechoslovakia immediately. Should it not agree, they would transfer them to Hungary as soon as possible. The MID did not object to the screening of the repatriates in Sighet by a Czechoslovak official.⁴³⁵

Screening via correspondence looked simple on paper. A list of repatriates from Sighet would be sent to the embassy via Golubev, the embassy would look up the decision of the Ministry of the Interior in Vaško's files, and the decision regarding who should be sent to Czechoslovakia and who to Hungary would be sent via Golubev to Sighet. However, Kašpárek had already hinted that problems were likely to occur, because in the embassy's experience the Soviet lists tended to be inaccurate. This was indeed the case, and as early as in mid-June there was a problem with the lists from Sighet. The list sent by the command of the prison camp in Sighet was "unsatisfactory," as reported to Prague on 15 June by Kašpárek.⁴³⁶ Kašpárek had met General Basilov (deputizing for Golubev, who was ill) the previous day to discuss this issue.

It was obvious that it would be impossible to cope with the situation in Sighet without sending a plenipotentiary from the embassy in Moscow who would screen what was described as the first group (Hungarians from Czechoslovak territory annexed by Hungary) and agree with the command of the camp how to proceed further. Basilov apparently proposed that Vaško should fly to Bucharest and from there, accompanied by a Soviet officer, drive to Sighet. Kašpárek proposed that Vaško could fly to Bucharest on 19 June. He was considering sending another official of the Moscow embassy as assistant to Vaško. Kašpárek urged Prague to send him an answer as soon as they reached an agreement with Bucharest, because "Basilov wants the camp vacated."

However, the Czechoslovak embassy in Bucharest did not agree with sending Vaško to Sighet. On 27 June 1948, Ambassador Peregrin Fíša sent a telegram to the embassy in Moscow and to Prague, in which he argued that Vaško was not needed in Sighet. Fíša explains that he talked to Lt. Bogdanov, according to whom there were only former Czechoslovak citizens of Hungarian ethnicity from southern Slovakia who had been captured as soldiers of the Hungarian Army in Sighet. Because the Czechoslovak authorities did not recognize these persons as Czechoslovak citizens and did not approve their repatriation, the Soviet administration was handing these persons over to Hungary, as had happened in 1946 and 1947. Fíša further says that he pointed out to Bogdanov that among these prisoners of war there may be Slovaks who had been forced to serve in the Hungarian Army. Bogdanov apparently replied that this was certainly possible; however, the question of the ethnicity of all prisoners of war in the USSR had already been investigated by Soviet authorities in the USSR and all Czechs and Slovaks had already been given the chance of repatriation. Bogdanov was going to visit the camp in Sighet and would be in touch with the Czechoslovak embassy in Bucharest. For these reasons, Fíša considered it pointless to send Vaško to Sighet. He added that as soon as he received from Bogdanov a report on his visit to Sighet, he would inform the embassy in Moscow.⁴³⁷

The hectic atmosphere around the speeding-up of repatriations suddenly changed on 29 June 1948, when the Soviet Union officially declared that they considered repatriations to be completed. This brought to an end the relatively positive development in the previous months, when it seemed that there were no obstacles to repatriations from the Soviet side and that there was a willingness to proceed with them as fast as possible and on a possibly large scale. Anyone who had not been so fortunate as to make it home by then, lost this chance almost completely, although repatriations did take place for a while after this date.

Fiša's intervention also reached Golubev. Václav Vaško met Golubev on 11 July 1948. When he later reported to the new ambassador in Moscow, Bohuslav Laštovička, he mentioned that Golubev was surprised that Vaško had not gone to Sighet yet, "although everything was agreed a long time ago." In the meantime the "number of persons in the camp grew from 344 to 509, which makes their immediate screening even more urgent." Vaško informed Golubev about Fiša's conversation with Bogdanov. Golubev said that Bogdanov's information was incorrect and apparently mistaken, called him immediately and asked him for clarification. He repeated to Vaško that the position communicated to Kašpárek earlier remained unchanged. In conclusion, Golubev told Vaško to see him again on 15 July to set a date for the departure of a Czechoslovak plenipotentiary to Sighet. Laštovička sent a telegram to Prague requesting an immediate decision, so that he could give Golubev a definite answer on 15 July.⁴³⁸

Just a few minutes before sending this telegram, Laštovička had sent another telegram to headquarters, also concerning Vaško's meeting with Golubev. Laštovička reported that Golubev told Vaško that according to Soviet records, 91,560 persons had been repatriated since the end of the war, including 55,517 prisoners and internees. Golubev requested that this data be compared with the data of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior and that he be informed of the result. According to the telegram, Golubev also said that in the transit camps there were 670 prisoners and internees who claimed to be Czechoslovak citizens. Of these, 161 were in Odessa and 509 in Sighet.

Laštovička reported to Prague that Golubev was puzzled by the slow pace of the screening for political reliability of internees and prisoners by the Czechoslovak authorities. He complained that the Czechoslovak attitude made it impossible to vacate the Odessa camp and hindered the speeding-up of repatriations. Golubev apparently insisted that the Czechoslovak authorities should decide quickly about all persons waiting for repatriation in these camps.⁴³⁹

Although the Soviets unequivocally declared that they considered repatriation to be finished and that they would not deal with the lists any more, they had in the end to urge the Czechoslovak authorities to behave more flexibly and energetically. The Soviets clearly wanted to settle the repatriations *de facto*. The Soviet Union could not officially declare that there were no more prisoners of war and internees on their territory when full camps in Luisdorf and Sighet were proving the opposite. These repatriation camps were internationally known. The fact that a significant number of detainees were still in labor camps was a different issue. It was not difficult to keep this secret.

On 26 July Laštovička reported to Clementis that Golubev had complained at the MID about the Czechoslovak approach to the screening of the internees in Odessa, where many detainees apparently waited for up to nine months for the decision of the Czechoslovak authorities. Golubev's complaint was conveyed to Counselor Emil Štefan by Chebotarev. The embassy was requested to send a plenipotentiary with discretionary powers to screen all detainees in Odessa immediately and to decide about their repatriation. Laštovička pointed out to Clementis that Czechoslovakia was the only country which was given the possibility to screen prisoners and internees before their repatriation from the Soviet Union. Laštovička reported that the Soviets considered the slow progress of the Czechoslovak screening as an abuse of this privilege.⁴⁴⁰ However, was it really such a privilege? It would perhaps have been better if Czechoslovakia had not had this option. The Czechoslovak authorities would not have been tempted to choose which former Czechoslovak citizens were desirable or undesirable, where ethnicity was the main criterion.

Although these influential authorities recommended that Václav Vaško be sent to Sighet, the Foreign Ministry in Prague decided otherwise. On 14 July 1948, Borek sent a telegram to the embassy in Moscow, in which he once and for all stopped the preparations for Vaško's mission to Sighet. The journey was apparently pointless and the screening of detainees would be done by František Skála, the representative of the Ministry of the Interior at the Czechoslovak repatriation committee in the Romanian city Oradea.⁴⁴¹ Perhaps if the ministry had known earlier about the results of Vaško's meeting with Golubev, it might have decided differently. Vaško met Golubev on 11 July, and on 13 July Laštovička reported to Prague Golubev's criticism that Vaško had not yet been sent to Sighet. It is therefore more than likely that the message crossed with the telegram sent from Prague on 14 July.

Vaško would have been probably able to deal with the repatriation agenda in Sighet more efficiently and, most importantly, much earlier than Skála. Kašpárek proposed sending Vaško to Sighet as early as 15 May. It seems that from mid-May to the end of July the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry was not able to do anything for the internees waiting for repatriation in Sighet. Vaško's journey to Sighet was canceled by the Foreign Ministry on 14 July. However, on 26 July there was still no one working on the screening in Sighet, despite the fact that the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged Laštovička finally to begin the screening in Sighet. Laštovička was not even able to answer the MID's query about who was the representative of the Ministry of the Interior in Oradea. At that point,

Laštovička had not been informed who the representative would be. The Soviet authorities needed the representative's date of birth and passport number so he could be issued with necessary documents. Three days later, on 29 July, Laštovička was informed that the representative of the Ministry of the Interior in Oradea was František Skála, born 5 November 1906 in Vienna, and that he was ready to travel to Sighet.⁴⁴²

The Handing over of the Transports to Czechoslovakia and the Lists of Repatriates

When the transports arrived at the Czechoslovak border, the repatriates were handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities. The Soviet authorities often complained that Czechoslovak officers were not always ready in Chop to take them over. On their way home, most repatriates went through Malacky (or Košice), where lists were made. These lists from Malacky, whether with the letterhead of the prison camp or the garrison headquarters of the Czechoslovak Army that was running the camp, are one of the few sources which systematically registered those who returned from the Gulag. The camp commander was Captain Monjak. The Soviet escort often did not wait for the Czechoslovak authorities to take over the repatriates and simply dissolved the transport. Once the repatriates left for home, it was impossible to make any records. It also happened, mostly in Sighet, that repatriates of Hungarian ethnicity from Slovakia who were not cleared for repatriation to Czechoslovakia applied for repatriation to the Hungarian repatriation committee, which reportedly did not do any screening. Upon their arrival in Hungary these people—legally and with the approval of the Hungarian authorities, or semi-legally, or completely illegally—crossed the Hungarian–Slovak border and went home. The head of the 7th Department of the Commissariat of the Interior in Bratislava, Major Sedník, reported to the Ministry of the Interior in Prague on 21 November 1947:

The number of people who are illegally crossing the state border from Hungary has been increasing dangerously. They are mainly returning prisoners of war released from the USSR. They are prisoners of war from the Hungarian Army, who originally come from the southern border region of Slovakia and who, as Hungarian citizens, served in the Hungarian Army.⁴⁴³

It was clearly not just prisoners of war but also deported civilians who were returning to Czechoslovakia this way. It is not surprising that repatriates who were returning home after years of internment and were so

close to the Czechoslovak border did not want to risk further lengthy procedures, and used any opportunity to get back home. There are many testimonies that something as small as the absence of a Czechoslovak officer at the border could raise the prisoners' suspicions that it was a Soviet trick and that they would be returned to the Gulag. They would be seized by desperate panic. One female repatriate said that she experienced "the most terrible moments just a few meters away from the border" because no Czechoslovak escort was present. In this case it turned out to be a misunderstanding caused by the difference between the Central European and Moscow time zones.⁴⁴⁴ Some repatriates were arrested immediately after they crossed the border and sent to prison, usually to Košice. Although this was usually a mere formality and the repatriate was released soon afterwards, it was a drastic experience and one of the reasons why repatriates wanted to reach home as soon as possible, far from all authorities.

It had become apparent in 1946 that it would not be possible to convince the Soviet side to release deported Czechoslovak citizens en bloc, and that the Soviet authorities would not provide Czechoslovakia with lists of persons deported from Czechoslovak territory. Under these circumstances the Czechoslovak authorities started an extensive action to register all deported and repatriated persons on the territorial principle. These lists were made by the local police stations or local national committees. The lists are a very important source regarding deportations; however, they are only useful as a sample, not as a complete register of all repatriates. The action was centrally organized and the registers therefore have a unified standard form, stating name, date of birth, date of arrest, address and the way the person returned (in most cases with a transport, usually via Malacky, or on their own). For example, there is a large dossier with lists of persons who returned from internment in the USSR, dated March, April and May 1946, mostly from 27 March and 2 April 1946, made by local national committees in Slovakia. Let us have a closer look at the lists:

Pavlovce, Feledince (now Rimavská Sobota district) in the category "Cz[echoslovak] citizens of Hungarian ethnicity" nine persons and "Cz[echoslovak] citizens of Hungarian ethnicity who can be expected to keep Czechoslovak citizenship": seventeen persons (list dated 13 April 1946)

Sútor, Feledince district: persons of Hungarian and German ethnicity "who can be expected to keep Czechoslovak citizenship": twenty-one (list dated 13 April 1946), "citizens of Slovak, Czech and other Slavonic nationalities who returned": five persons

Kežmarok, local police station: ten persons (list dated 29 April 1947); eleven persons (list dated 12 November 1947)

Salka, Parkan (now Nové Zámky) district, local police station: eight persons (list dated 27 October 1947)

Feledince (now Jesenské), local police station: eight persons (list dated 3 November 1947)

Humenné, district town: three persons (list dated 10 November 1947)

Giraltovce, Svidník district: two persons (list dated 13 November 1947)

Levoča, district town: one person (list dated 14 November 1947)

Matejovce, Poprad district: four persons (list dated 17 November 1947)

Spišská Nová Ves, district town: twenty-one persons (20 November 1947)

Coma, Čoma, Csoma (now Čamovce, Lučenec district): "persons of Czech and Slovak ethnicity" category: one person; "persons of Hungarian and German ethnicity" category: thirty persons

Šid, Lučenec district: "persons of Hungarian and German ethnicity" category: twenty-five persons

Belen, Feledince district (maybe Belín, now Rimavská Sobota district): "citizens of Slovak, Czech and other Slavonic nationalities who returned" category: five persons

Jánošovce, Feledince (now Rimavská Sobota district): "citizens of Slovak, Czech and other Slavonic nationalities who returned" category: two persons, "persons of Hungarian ethnicity" category: eight; "interned persons of Hungarian ethnicity who can be expected to keep Czechoslovak citizenship" category: fourteen

Hrhov, Rožňava district: two persons⁴⁴⁵

This is just a small sample of the lists from 1947. It is yet another proof of using criteria based on ethnicity. Many lists register two categories of citizens: "persons of Czech, Slovak or other Slavonic ethnicity" and "persons of Hungarian and German ethnicity." It should not strike us as unusual that there are much fewer persons of Slovak than Hungarian ethnicity since the major part of the population of these regions of southern Slovakia was Hungarian.

What should be noted is the number of repatriates, which is very low compared with the number of people abducted from these localities. Just for the sake of comparison: on one list there are ninety-one deported persons from Levoča, twenty-four from Matejovce, seventy-one from Kežmarok and around eighty from the small village of Hrhov. Of course, not all persons who were deported from the same place returned at the same time, nor did they all come to the same camp. For example, four people from Matejovce returned as early as November 1947, whereas Gejza Pásztor, also from Matejovce, returned home in 1949. We cannot establish the total number of people who returned on the basis of these partial registers as they are too fragmented. However, they can help us complete the picture of deportations from a different angle. The best source for establishing the number of repatriates would have been lists of persons in the transports before these were dissolved. However, as far as

is known, the Soviets did not make such lists; if they did, they did not give them to the Czechoslovak authorities.

We have already mentioned that in 1948 the Soviet Union tried to get rid of a substantial number of prisoners of war and deportees because the deadline for repatriation of all prisoners of war was approaching. This campaign is also reflected in the reports about repatriations from the USSR submitted by the local police stations in Slovakia. For example, by order from ZV-SNB (Land Headquarters—Police Force) Bratislava of 31 August 1948 the following municipalities submitted reports about the return of internees from the USSR:⁴⁴⁶

Košice—sixty-three persons; Slovenská Ves, Kežmarok district; Nováky, Prievidza district; Nuríková (correctly Dolná or Horná Mariková), Povážská Bystrica district; Parkan (now Štúrovo), Nové Zámky district; Guta (now Kolárovo), Komárno district; Veľký Horeš, Kráľovský Chlmec (now Trebišov) district; Trhová Hradská, Dunajská Streda district; Konrádovce, current district Rimavská Sobota; Sládkovičovo, Galanta district; Šafárikovo (currently Tornaľa), Revúca district; Hontianska Vrbica, Želiezovce (currently Levice) district; Čebovce, and Modrý Kameň (currently Veľký Krtíš) district; Pavlovce, Veľké Kapušany (currently Michalovce) district—sixty-two persons.

In the second half of 1948 and in 1949 the following local police stations reported the return of internees: Košice—eighteen persons (20 June 1949) and twenty-eight persons (4 August 1949); Široké, Prešov district—three persons (8 September 1948); Veľké Slemence, V. Kapušany (currently Michalovce) district—ninety persons (12 September 1948); Ipeľské Predmostie, Krupina (currently Veľký Krtíš) district—one person (12 September 1948), fifty-eight persons (25 July 1949); Plešivec, Rožňava district—three persons (13 September 1948); Žihárec, Šaľa district—five persons (13 September 1948); Mužla, Štúrovo (currently Nové Zámky) district—eight persons (4 March 1949); Jablonov, Moldava nad Bebravou (currently Levoča) district—fourteen persons (11 March 1949); Čierna, Kráľovský Chlmec (currently Trebišov) district—forty-five persons (18 March 1949); Hurbanovo, Komárno district (21 June 1949); Farná, (listed also as Ferná, currently Levice)—return of deportees reported on 29 June 1949 and on 8 September 1949 (forty-nine persons); Hodejov, Rimavská Sobota district (19 July 1949); Jelka, Galanta district (25 July 1949); district town Sobrance (26 July 1949); Báč, Dunajská Streda district (6 August 1949); Jelšava, Revúca district (8 August 1949); Gbelce, Nové Zámky district—sixty persons (8 September 1949); Holiša, Lučenec district—fifty-one persons (9 September 1949).⁴⁴⁷

These lists are a very important source; however, we have to keep in mind that—unless explicitly stated otherwise—they may record both civilian deportees and prisoners of war, who were much more numerous than civilians.

At the time of the most systematic registration of deportees, the returnees were few and far between. It was more likely that people were reporting that members of their family were missing rather than that they had returned home. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs constantly urged in memos and in correspondence with families that they should report the return of their family members. However, this depended on the good will and discipline of the respective families.⁴⁴⁸ A large number of repatriates returned home immediately after having crossed the border, as the Soviet authorities often simply let the internees cross the border on their own. Given these circumstances, it was obviously very difficult to keep precise records about repatriates. We also know that many former prisoners who returned from the Gulag were keeping a low profile after their return. They were scared and avoided the authorities; they did not want to be known, and they were also intimidated—particularly after the Communist takeover in February 1948—into not talking to anyone about what they had been through. It is also very important to keep in mind that the majority of repatriates passing through Malacky were prisoners of war. The deported civilians among them were put on a separate list only occasionally, in cases where there was a larger group. Let us look at some lists from Malacky and Košice as examples:

21 August 1946: The Regional Security Office in Košice reports the return of sixty Slovak prisoners from the USSR.

26 August 1946: The Regional Security Office in Košice reports the return of 136 prisoners from Moravia and sixty-six prisoners from Bohemia.

3 September 1946: Garrison headquarters of the Czechoslovak Army in Malacky reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the return of eighty-nine prisoners of war from the USSR, who arrived in Malacky the previous day.

17 September 1946: Garrison headquarters of the Czechoslovak Army in Malacky reports ninety-eight persons who returned on 15 September 1946.

9 October 1946: Lt. Ján Šmída (Košice) reports to the Foreign Ministry the return of 466 persons.

23 October 1946: Garrison headquarters of the Czechoslovak Army in Malacky reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the return of fifty persons—thirty-three soldiers, the rest civilian.

27 March 1947: The command of the prison camp Malacky reports to the Commissariat of the Interior the return of twenty-seven internees from the USSR.⁴⁴⁹

3. The Final Phase of Screening in Luisdorf and Sighet

The Tardiness of the Czechoslovak Authorities

The final phase of screenings in Luisdorf and Sighet took place after the Communists came to power in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. On 29 July 1948, the embassy in Moscow received a note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. The note said that there were 750 Czechoslovak citizens—prisoners of war and internees—in Soviet repatriation camps, 589 in Sighet in Romania and 161 in Odessa. According to the MID, a large number of these persons had already been screened by a Czechoslovak official in October 1947. The note further states that although the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Soviet repatriation authorities had repeatedly urged the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow to speed up the repatriation of this group of prisoners of war and internees, these persons had not yet been taken over by the Czechoslovak authorities. The MID now announced that the Soviet repatriation authorities would not be able to hold these prisoners of war in repatriation camps for any longer than fifteen to twenty days. After this deadline they would have to send them back to camps for prisoners of war and internees. Attaché Vaško was charged with dealing with this note.⁴⁵⁰

After the relatively efficient screening visits of the officials of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow to Luisdorf in 1947, there had been no more visits for several months. Golubev pointed this out to Horák during their conversation on 5 February 1948. According to Horák's report to Prague,

[Golubev] was puzzled that I [Horák] was still not able to say whether a part of the group seen by Šulc in October last year in the camp in Odessa should be repatriated to Czechoslovakia. Golubev said that this hindered the release of other detainees—our citizens. I am therefore asking for an immediate decision regarding this remainder so that I can inform Golubev.⁴⁵¹

People waiting for repatriation in Odessa and Sighet now really did have the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. Although I have repeatedly denounced the Soviet Union's willful treatment of citizens of other states and its manipulative behavior, I cannot but say that the tardiness of the Czechoslovak authorities was reprehensible. If the facts in the Soviet note are true, persons who had already been cleared for repatriation had waited since October 1947—nine months—to be taken over by the Czechoslovak authorities. These internees had probably already spent

weeks and perhaps months in repatriation camps waiting for the screening. And now, after all that, they were in danger of being transferred back to the camps of the Gulag. How can the tardiness of the Czechoslovak authorities be explained? In a situation where the Soviet side provided generous room for repatriations and tried to speed them up as much as possible, Czechoslovakia—as perhaps the only state involved—showed no willingness to use this situation and bring its citizens home. I presume that after February 1948 the efficiency of the Czechoslovak authorities dropped and there was less willingness to take responsibility, in particular in such a sensitive matter as the repatriation of people with a history of imprisonment or internment in the Soviet Union. It was probably a combination of the Munich trauma that influenced Beneš's postwar establishment and the Communist attitude toward the internees, who—rightly or wrongly—carried the stigma of collaboration with the Nazis or belonged to an ethnicity that was undesirable in Czechoslovakia.

Laštovička reacted to the Soviet note on 30 July 1948 with this telling dispatch:

Gen. Golubev invited Major Klusáček and Vaško for a meeting yesterday. He told them that there are 165 prisoners of war and internees in Odessa and 441 in Sighet, who claim to be Czechoslovak citizens and whose families are allegedly in the Czechoslovak Republic. Persons from the camp in Sighet, regarding whose families it was established without doubt that they had been transferred to Hungary, were handed over to the Hungarian authorities. Golubev insisted that we must finally decide about the persons in Odessa. He said that the Soviet government urged his authority to finish the repatriation immediately. They had to report on a regular basis the numbers of detainees in the camps under their authority. The repatriation authority had to explain repeatedly, why the camp in Odessa was being vacated so slowly. Golubev continued: "Other states involved usually urge us to repatriate their prisoners quickly. In your case, the opposite applies. We have to beg you to take over the prisoners we put at your disposal. I beg your pardon, but we find your attitude ridiculous. We ask your government to authorize your embassy to objective decision making regarding the repatriation of prisoners and internees assembled in Odessa. Similar authorization should be given to the official of the Ministry of the Interior in Romania regarding the camp in Sighet. It would probably be most suitable if one of your officials went to Odessa immediately. We would issue him with a permit to enter the camp and he would be accompanied by two officers from the repatriation authority of the Council of Ministers of the USSR."

Golubev also said that only the Czechoslovak plenipotentiary was given the possibility to visit the Odessa camp. I propose to send Vaško to Odessa immediately, possibly accompanied by the Deputy Military Attaché Maj. Klusáček. They would be fully responsible for the screening.⁴⁵²

On 7 August 1948 the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Repatriation issued a permit for František Skála to enter the camp in Sighet, with the provision that he must go to Sighet by 20 August. At the same time it was announced that Vaško should go to Odessa on 10 August, accompanied by Maj. P.P. Samoylov.⁴⁵³ This was an immediate reaction to the Czechoslovak embassy's note of 4 August 1948, announcing that the Czechoslovak authorities instructed Skála and Vaško to go to Sighet and Odessa and request permits for these two officials. Clearly, Soviet bureaucracy could be efficient when necessary. The Czechoslovak embassy's note was first sent to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the ministry made a summary of the note and sent it to Golubev's authority. We know that—under different circumstances—this could have taken weeks. We can also see that the Soviet intervention quickly dissipated the tardiness of many months on the Czechoslovak side and things gathered pace. The formalities of Vaško and Skála's mission were being sorted out by telegraph at the last minute. On 1 August a dispatch from Vlastimil Borek arrived, saying that Vaško should screen the detainees in Odessa and that a decision regarding detainees in Sighet had been taken earlier—referring to the sending of the representative of the Ministry of the Interior František Skála from Oradea. On 2 August 1948 Laštovička checked whether Borek's telegram from the previous day indeed meant that Vaško and Skála had discretionary powers, as requested by Golubev. It is true that Borek's telegram did not mention what kind of authorization Vaško and Skála had for their work in the repatriation camps. On 4 August 1948 the Foreign Ministry sent a telegram stating that Vaško and Skála were given discretionary powers as requested by Golubev.⁴⁵⁴ The whole process of sending an authorized official to Sighet and Odessa took three months—from mid-May, when Kašpárek proposed Vaško for the job, until 20 August, the deadline for Skála's arrival in Sighet. However, in the end less than a week was enough, from 29 July, when Laštovička met Golubev, until 4 August, when Vaško and Skála received authorization from Prague.

Václav Vaško in Luisdorf, August 1948

In the end, Václav Vaško flew to Odessa to finalize the repatriation of hundreds of internees, many of whom had been there for almost a year and had already been screened for repatriation. Vaško flew on 10 August, accompanied by Major Samoylov. It is more than likely that without Golubev's intervention the whole issue would have dragged on for longer.

*Václav Vaško about the Screening Mission in Luisdorf*⁴⁵⁵

10–16 August 1948

Golubev's Authority assembled prisoners and other persons whose repatriation from the USSR had already been decided in repatriation camps. The embassy sent me in summer 1948 to the Luisdorf repatriation camp near Odessa to screen the validity of requests for repatriation to Czechoslovakia. The camp bungalows stood near the deserted spa town on the Black Sea coast. [Luisdorf was a seaside resort whose mostly German inhabitants were deported by Stalin to Central Asia during the war.] It was an ideal place for the wretched prisoners to recover before their return to their families. The camp command resided in a villa with a terrace, park and a sandy beach. I sat down to my desk with six repatriation officers. They called me "*gospodin konsul*" and I tried in vain to explain to them that I was not a consul.

When the escort brought the prisoners before the committee that I chaired, every prisoner clicked their heels in the German military fashion and reported. My "*Setzen Sie sich, bitte*" sounded unreal to them. If I found in the register I brought with me a decision of our Ministry of the Interior, whether positive or negative, regarding the screened person, the case was decided. Otherwise I was authorized to make my own decision, which I used to proceed generously. I accepted a letter sent from wife or parents in Czechoslovakia as sufficient proof that the candidate for repatriation to Czechoslovakia did not lose our citizenship. The Soviets liked that because they were interested in vacating the camp quickly.

"*Pán konzul*," one of the prisoners addressed me in Slovak, wanting to talk to me in private. Apparently he knew me from Bratislava. I indeed remembered that I used to see him in lectures at the University of Economics but he disappeared after the first or second term. We went out to the park for an hour. He said that out of sheer stupidity he volunteered as a German from Bratislava for the Wehrmacht. His experiences at the front and in captivity apparently cured him of his Nazi delusion for good. He asked me to advise him, whether he should try to return to Slovakia or let himself be sent into the unknown, to Germany. I told him that he does not have a choice, because his parents had most likely already been transferred to Germany, and even if he could return, he could not expect anything good. "I thought so," he said and thanked me. Then he asked me to bring to the Romanian embassy a message from a married couple who have been waiting for a long time in Luisdorf for repatriation to Romania.

The prisoners organized a farewell concert in my honor in the open-air theater. Sitting in the front row were local dignitaries and the officers' wives. There were also more than a thousand prisoners (not all of them heading in our direction) who greeted me with applause. They had a decent orchestra, choir and soloists. After the concert one of the repatriation officers went with me to Odessa. When we arrived in the Hotel London he asked me if he could stay over in my suite... Instead of saying "no" right away, I hesitated, which he understood as agreement... I went to bed, determined not to fall asleep. I did not manage and in the morning I was looking in vain for the message I was supposed to bring to the Romanians.

Vaško finished his work in Odessa quickly. If officials like him had been given more room, the fate of many people would have certainly been much better. Vaško flew to Odessa on 10 August and already on 18 Au-

gust the Foreign Ministry in Prague received the list of persons he cleared for repatriation and of those who did not pass the screening. Vaško sent the list from Moscow on 17 August. Laštovička—it was the ambassador who sent a report based on Vaško's materials to the headquarters—reported that Vaško finished screening 165 prisoners and repatriates in Luisdorf. He allowed repatriation of 105 persons (registered on the list, including dates of birth), turned down 59 persons and one case was left undecided.⁴⁵⁶ Vaško mainly relied on the data from his files containing the Ministry of the Interior's positive or negative verdict regarding most of the detainees. Thus he did not have to, and actually could not, make his own decisions. The question arises, why did he need to go with his files to Luisdorf and there look up the Ministry's decision and approve or turn down the repatriation of individual internees? The list of people approved by the Ministry of the Interior could have been sent to Luisdorf from Moscow without sending an embassy official there, and at least some internees could have returned home earlier. If it was not possible to handle the repatriations this way, Vaško clearly did his best to perform his task in a way that would maximally facilitate the internees' return home. On the list of persons whose repatriation was turned down, there is a note by the name of many internees that they should go to Berlin to report in. It seems that at this point, persons of German ethnicity who had not been cleared by the Ministry of the Interior for repatriation to Czechoslovakia were being repatriated to Germany. There is a note by the names of all persons whose repatriation had been turned down that they were German or Hungarian officers. In one case Vaško disagreed with the opinion of the Ministry of the Interior. Vaško, as a representative of the embassy in Moscow, would have allowed the repatriation of one person who had been turned down by the Ministry of the Interior. The person concerned, Stefan Sinko, was left in Luisdorf and Laštovička asked the Foreign Ministry in Prague to review the case. Vaško assumed that the Ministry of the Interior's decision might have been a mistake. Sinko's family had moved from Košice to Krompachy, which could have been mistakenly interpreted in Košice that they had been transferred.

In the cases of those internees where the Ministry of the Interior's decision was not available, Václav Vaško had to make his own decision. Among persons he saw in Luisdorf was a certain Alois Korbička from Lednice (b. 1932)—he was sixteen years old and had spent several years in internment. The note by his name said: "Left home with the Soviet Army." Jindřich Lebeda from Horní Počernice had also "left home with the Soviet Army." He was now sixteen years old and was waiting

in Luisdorf for repatriation. At this point the situation looked almost optimistic. Laštovička reported to Prague that this transport should arrive in Chop next Saturday or Sunday, and urged that Czechoslovak officials should be there on time to take over the repatriates. There were also up to four war criminals in the transport to Chop, who were to be handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities. One of these war criminals was Vincent Mayerhofer.

Problems with the Screening in Sighet

The screening in Sighet was encountering a number of problems, caused at this stage mainly by the Czechoslovaks. We know that as early as 15 August the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow considered sending Vaško to Sighet because the Soviet authorities pressed for a smooth transfer of prisoners and internees to Czechoslovakia. We also know that the Czechoslovak embassy in Bucharest sent an official to Sighet; however, he did not clear anyone for repatriation, and sent the whole transport to Hungary. The Czechoslovak ambassador in Bucharest had prevented Vaško's journey to Sighet and in the end it was decided to send the Ministry of the Interior's representative, František Skála. Even his departure dragged on. Finally, after the Soviet authorities' intervention, Skála was authorized to do the screening in Sighet. According to the Soviet authorities' request he was to arrive there by 20 August. Skála arrived in Sighet several days before this date; however, he avoided fulfilling his task. Golubev in Moscow soon received complaints about Skála. The situation in Sighet and Skála's attitude to his mission can be seen from Laštovička's dispatch from 19 August 1948.⁴⁵⁷

General Golubev invited General Fusek⁴⁵⁸ for a meeting today; however, Fusek was received by General Basilov, deputizing for Golubev who was ill.

Basilov expressed utter dissatisfaction with the course of screening of prisoners in Sighet. At the moment, there are 366 prisoners there. Skála arrived in Sighet a couple of days ago, handed out questionnaires to all the prisoners, who filled them in and returned them to Skála. Skála subsequently left Sighet without informing the camp command about his decision regarding repatriation of the persons assembled. Basilov conveyed Golubev's request that Skála or another Czechoslovak authorized representative should be sent to Sighet (he regrets that the plenipotentiary was not one of our embassy officials) who would be given discretionary powers to decide about all prisoners. Basilov also said that General Golubev was very satisfied with Vaško's screening in Odessa. Vaško allowed the repatriation of 105 persons, turned down fifty-nine and kept one internee in Odessa until a further decision by the Ministry of the Interior. The fifty-nine persons whose repatriation was turned down were sent to camps of the So-

viet Ministry of the Interior and from there they will be subsequently transferred to Germany, Austria or Hungary. The transport of persons cleared for repatriation will be sent from Odessa today or tomorrow. The camp in Odessa will therefore be available for new arrivals.

It is obvious that the Soviet authorities are outraged and extremely dissatisfied with our work in Sighet. I request, for political reasons, that Skála immediately returns to Sighet and empties the camp, to redeem at least slightly the negative impression caused by the persistent tardiness regarding repatriations on the part of our authorities, which undermines privileges granted to Czechoslovakia.

Several thousands of our citizens, or our former citizens—Hungarian prisoners—will be assembled in Sighet by the end of summer. It is our fault that the Soviet authorities will hardly be able to fulfill their plan of repatriation of Hungarian prisoners. The Repatriation Office, responsible for repatriations to the Soviet government, is therefore putting more and more pressure on us, either directly or through the MID.

Laštovička suggested that Skála should be given the same authority as Vaško in Odessa. However, Skála already had this authority and did not act on it. Prague tried to set things right relatively quickly. On 21 August 1948 the Foreign Ministry in Prague sent a telegram to Moscow, saying that “Skála was instructed to go to Sighet immediately and, following the guidelines of the Ministry of the Interior, decide there about the repatriation of prisoners.”⁴⁵⁹ František Skála, a police officer, reported as follows on his repeated screening mission on 26 August 1948:

I was authorized on the instructions of the Ministry of the Interior (Bayer) to make a decision in the case of the repatriation of former prisoners of war in the Soviet repatriation camp in Sighet, Romania. Apart from former prisoners of war, there are persons who were taken for forced labor by the retreating German Army during 1944 and subsequently taken by the Soviet Army to the USSR, and persons taken from their home to work in the USSR in 1945, who are now being repatriated to Czechoslovakia. All of them suffer from detention psychosis and show an uncontrollable urge to return as soon as possible to their families. Altogether 267 persons applied for return to Czechoslovakia in Sighet. I allowed 250 of them to return. The camp commander Colonel Krizhanovsky requested from me one copy of the register of persons cleared for repatriation. The register will also be used by the Soviet commander in charge of the transport for consignment.⁴⁶⁰

Czechoslovak and Soviet Positions before the End of Repatriation

In 1947 one of the main criteria for repatriation was ethnicity. The embassy in Moscow was many times instructed that Czechoslovakia was not interested in citizens of German and Hungarian ethnicity and that they should be excluded during the screening. In the case of Hungarians, the fact that many were originally Czechoslovak citizens of Hungarian ethnicity was not taken

into account. Interestingly, in mid-1948 the attitude toward these repatriates began to change. The embassy started to receive instructions according to which "Hungarians from the present-day territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, who were demonstrably Czechoslovak citizens in 1938, are to be included in the repatriation of prisoners of war from the USSR."⁴⁶¹

It seems that the Soviet Union considered the Czechoslovak screening a mere formality and was only interested in proceeding with the transports without any trouble. As we have seen, when the Soviet authorities decided to release the internees, they wanted to do it quickly and were not interested in protracted procedures regarding persons they were not interested in any more. At the same time, they were able to protract or make impossible the repatriation of persons they did not want to release. The Soviet authorities tolerated the Czechoslovak effort to control who would be allowed to return as far as the screening did not impede repatriation when the Soviets wanted it to go smoothly. At the same time, the Soviets repatriated to Czechoslovakia a large number of people regardless of the fact that the Czechoslovak side had not decided about their repatriation.

In 1948 it was becoming more and more obvious that the screening on which the Czechoslovak side insisted and in which it took certain "pride" because no other state had this privilege, was becoming more and more a difficult and pointless procedure for the Soviets. The Soviet Union was under increasing pressure, with a view to the approaching deadline, to release all the prisoners of war. There were still too many of them in the Soviet Union, so the Soviets could not conceal or deny their presence. In addition, their health was generally so poor that these people could not be useful as cost-free labor any more, which was the reason they had been held in the Soviet Union for so long. For example, an official of the MID, Chebotarev, told Krno that there were 6,000 prisoners of German ethnicity who were apparently former Czechoslovak citizens in Soviet prison camps. This number appeared all of a sudden and it did not correspond at all with the data about the number of Czechoslovak citizens in the Soviet camps that the Soviet side supplied earlier. However, Chebotarev now inquired—and requested an immediate decision from the Czechoslovak government⁴⁶²—whether Czechoslovakia was interested in the repatriation of these 6,000 prisoners. If Czechoslovakia was not interested in them, they would be transferred to Germany. Chebotarev declared that "the MID does not attach much importance to a register of these prisoners, as this is not an individual repatriation but a decision based on a principle."

This approach clearly differs from the previous repatriation practice. Without any register, preliminary screening by the Czechoslovak Ministry

of the Interior, or visit by an official of the embassy, the Soviet Union would immediately send to Czechoslovakia 6,000 prisoners of war of German ethnicity, i.e., persons, who would have been turned down by the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior just a few months earlier. If Czechoslovakia did not want them, they would be sent straight to Germany. Let us remember one case we mentioned here: a Czechoslovak citizen of German ethnicity who was sent back “to the Gulag” because his family had probably been transferred to Germany, and as a result this man could not be sent either to Czechoslovakia or to Germany. Certain criteria for repatriation were set, a pedantic adherence to these criteria caused a number of human tragedies, and then these criteria were abandoned as pointless when it suited the strongest player in this drama—the Soviet Union.

4. Czechoslovak Diplomats in Moscow in Charge of the Repatriation Agenda

Ambassador Jiří Horák: Ethical Realist

Dr. Jiří Horák was the first postwar Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow. He received the *agrément* on 23 October 1945. Horák was a university professor who had had a long and successful academic career when, aged sixty-one, he assumed the post of ambassador. His appointment to Moscow was an expression of hope that the cooperation of the Western Allies with the Soviet Union would continue after the war and that the spirit of Slavonic mutuality would be an important factor in the Czechoslovak–Soviet relations. These ideas were quite widespread in certain Czechoslovak intellectual and political circles. However, they were gradually disappointed by the postwar reality and the superpower attitude of the Soviet Union. The last blow to this concept was the Communist takeover in 1948.

Ambassador Horák's task was not easy. It seems, however, that Czechoslovak diplomats arriving in Moscow after the war to assume their positions in peacetime conditions were very optimistic and enthusiastic. Jiří Horák was indeed a very capable and erudite man and he did formidable work while he was in office. He was an exceptional personality, albeit somewhat stern and cold. He probably felt much more secure in a lecture hall or in his study than negotiating with unyielding and self-assured Soviet diplomats.

Horák was born on 4 December 1884 and graduated in Czech, Slavonic and German studies at the Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague. He was awarded a doctorate in 1916 and in 1919 appointed *docent* (senior lecture/associate professor) in Comparative Slavonic Literatures and Folklore. As his habilitation work Horák submitted the study “Slovanské vlivy v literatuře české” (Slavonic Influences in Czech Literature), part 1, section 2, “Ukrajinské látky v literatuře české do r. 1874” (Ukrainian Topics in Czech Literature to 1874). Horák's application for habilitation was approved on 17 July 1919 by a three-member commission composed of Václav Tille (known to the general public under the pseudonym Václav Říha), Jan Máchal and Jiří Polívka. The breadth of Horák's knowledge of Slavonic literature and his diligence and detailed work were emphasized in their reports.⁴⁶³

In 1922 Horák was appointed a reader in Comparative Slavonic Literatures at the Masaryk University in Brno. His academic reputation grew

and he was offered the post of a professor at the newly opened Slavonic Institute at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Horák did not accept this offer because he had ambitions for a post at the Charles University in Prague.

In 1926 he was appointed a professor at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague, where he taught the history of Slavonic literatures and published scholarly works. In 1932 he became the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University. He lectured at the universities of Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Sophia, and in Romania. In 1937 he was invited to lecture in Strasbourg, Paris and Lyon, as one of the leading authorities in his field in Europe.

During this time Horák's reputation in political circles grew. It was common knowledge that he was preparing academic materials for President T.G. Masaryk. In 1936 Masaryk commissioned him for research on the third volume of his *Russia and Europe*. In the same year Horák, then fifty-two, married Anna Gašpariková, Masaryk's librarian and archivist. She gave an account of these years in her memoirs *U Masarykovcov. Spomienky osobnej archivárky T.G. Masaryka* (With the Masaryks: Memories of the Personal Archivist of T.G. Masaryk).⁴⁶⁴ Anna Gašpariková-Horáková was born on 28 October 1896 in Martin in Slovakia and died there on 23 February 1987. She graduated in History from the Charles University in Prague. In her academic work she stressed the importance of the Reformation tradition in Slovakia and how Slovakia belonged to West European culture. Both Jiří Horák and his wife were practicing Protestants.

Czechoslovak diplomats used to attend Horák's lectures, in which he combined academic and political issues. Horák put the Slavonic literatures into the broader European and world context and stressed the contribution of T.G. Masaryk to Slavonic studies. He emphasized Masaryk's idea that "ethical realism is a substantial character feature of Slavs in general." He identified with this idea and followed the development of this ethical realism from the Hussite movement, the teachings of the *Unitas fratrum*, the ideals of the Czech National Revival and Russian Slavophilia up to Masaryk. The German occupation of Czechoslovakia brought a sudden turn in Horák's life. During the period of the Protectorate he joined the domestic resistance and was imprisoned in 1944–1945.

Professor Horák was nominated for the post of Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow immediately after the war. He was considered as an ideal candidate—a man of great academic reputation both in the East and in the West, an expert on Slavonic issues, and a Masarykian intellectual

well connected at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Perhaps in different political circumstances Horák would have been indeed the best candidate. However, as ambassador, Horák first encountered the reality of the Bolshevik state; moreover, postwar Czechoslovakia was substantially different from Masaryk's First Republic, which was Horák's ideal. Ever more frequently in the world of postwar diplomacy, the adherent of ethical realism encountered socialist rather than ethical realism, and was hit by hard reality.

The ambassador's post in Moscow was a key diplomatic position even before February 1948 and its importance further increased after the Communist takeover. The Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow became one of the most important connection points between the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the Soviet Union. It is not surprising that for the Communists, Horák was not acceptable as ambassador in Moscow. Immediately after the Communist takeover, the Communists at the embassy established a Party Action Committee chaired by First Secretary Miloš Krno. The Action Committee passed a vote of no confidence in the ambassador. It must have been a shocking experience for Horák to hear from the Action Committee that they had no objections against him teaching at the university, but that because of his views he was not suitable to represent the new republic in the Soviet Union; nevertheless, they guaranteed him an honorable discharge.⁴⁶⁵ Even though Horák reacted by saying that "Truth Prevails" (the presidential motto chosen by Masaryk) and that Dr. Beneš was still president, he must have been aware that he was saying this just to keep face. Until the very last moment before he was recalled from Moscow, Horák tried to do the maximum for those waiting for repatriation and negotiated intensely with the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other authorities in order to accelerate the repatriations. However, Horák's influence was diminishing because the Soviets obviously knew that he was going to be recalled and waited for the new, Communist, ambassador.

After his return to Czechoslovakia Horák found the doors of the university closed, but obtained a position in the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, first in the Center for Folk Song and later as the head of the Department of Folklore in the Center for Ethnography and Folklore; subsequently, until 1963, he was director of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore.⁴⁶⁶ Jiří Horák died in 1975 in Martin in Slovakia.

Horák was indisputably one of the doyens of Slavonic studies in Czechoslovakia. His diplomatic post in Moscow was just an episode in his long and productive life, whose focus was academic work. Similarly episodic were the postwar illusions that it would be possible to build the de-

mocratic Czechoslovakia on Masarykian foundations but with a new relationship to the Soviet Union that Jiří Horák, a supporter of the idea of Slavonic cultural unity and mutuality, was supposed to help to build.⁴⁶⁷ Krno wrote in his memoirs about his conversation with Klement Gottwald concerning Horák. This took place probably in summer 1946 or 1947, during Gottwald's official visit to Moscow as prime minister. From what Krno wrote, we can see that they both mocked Ambassador Horák. Gottwald apparently said that they [the Communists] could not yet have their man as the ambassador, but that it was still better to have an impractical person than a "sly reactionary."⁴⁶⁸

His Excellency Comrade...

The embassy in Moscow was always a very important strategic position for the Czechoslovak Communists. During World War II the Czechoslovak Communist exiles in the Soviet Union worked closely with the pro-Communist Ambassador Zdeněk Fierlinger, and the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in Moscow was a platform for the Communist takeover in February 1948. Fierlinger held the post of Czechoslovak ambassador to Moscow from 7 October 1937. Between 1939 and 1941 diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and the USSR were suspended. Diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and the USSR were reestablished on 18 July 1941 and the activity of the legation in Moscow resumed on 20 August 1941. Zdeněk Fierlinger held the post of envoy until 28 September 1942, when diplomatic relations were raised to the level of embassy and Fierlinger was appointed ambassador.

Fierlinger returned from Moscow to Czechoslovakia as the prime minister of the first of the two Cabinets after the war, before the victory of the Communist Party in the first postwar elections. His successor as Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow was Jiří Horák, who after the February 1948 takeover was dismissed in the course of the Communization of the Czechoslovak diplomatic service.

Horák was replaced by Bohuslav Laštovička, born on 29 April 1905 in Pelhřimov. Laštovička graduated from the military academy in Hranice and served as an officer in the Czechoslovak Army (1924–1929); from 1929 to 1934 he studied at the Czech Technical University. Laštovička became a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party when he was twenty-six years old. Like many other high-ranking Communist functionaries, he worked as an editor in the Communist press. During the Spanish Civil War he joined the International Brigades (1937–1938) and was

commander of an anti-aircraft battery. During World War II he was one of the Czechoslovak Communist activists in exile in Great Britain, and worked as a commentator for the Czechoslovak radio broadcasts. After the war, he was appointed director of Czechoslovak Radio (1945–1948). There is no doubt that gaining control of the radio was of crucial importance for the Communist Party. After the Communist takeover in February 1948 Laštovička was appointed Czechoslovak ambassador to Moscow.⁴⁶⁹

Contrasted with Ambassador Horák, who had been moderate and self-controlled, Bohuslav Laštovička, as the first Communist ambassadorial appointee to Moscow, did not have a problem with living abundantly in the postwar situation of general want. Horák's puritanical frugality was replaced by Laštovička's flamboyance. Exorbitant sums were being paid for sumptuous receptions and celebrations. To Laštovička's surprise, the Soviets behaved as businessmen and charged market prices.

Laštovička clearly acquired his grand manner in Spain, where he had been a member of the International Brigade. According to surviving evidence, at the weekly embassy staff meetings he urged his subordinate diplomats always to read at least one page of the collected works of Klement Gottwald before they went to sleep, which he said he always did regularly and constantly found fresh inspiration in the profound thoughts.⁴⁷⁰ Laštovička clung to his rank, was frequently annoyed and snapped at his subordinates.⁴⁷¹ Krno also remembers this feature: Laštovička was apparently "a bit short-tempered and had a tendency to place too much importance on petty things."⁴⁷² However, Krno valued Laštovička highly as an experienced Party functionary, commander of the "Klement Gottwald" anti-artillery battery during the Spanish Civil War, a well-read Marxist and an experienced politician. According to Krno, with Laštovička's arrival in 1948 the embassy acquired the new face of a mission of a socialist state.⁴⁷³ Bohuslav Laštovička indeed had an ambition to start a new chapter in Czechoslovak–Soviet diplomatic relationships and his reports show this quite clearly. He started the new chapter with a thorough revision of the archive and library. He was upset to find that the library was lacking important political literature. Laštovička also had a new embassy building built in Moscow. Its pompous Stalinist style was supposed to express the close ties of Czechoslovakia with the Soviet Union. The repatriation actions came to an end during Laštovička's time in office. However, this did not mean that all the deported civilians and prisoners of war had returned to Czechoslovakia.

Laštovička held the post of ambassador for only two years. In 1950 he was replaced by Karel Kreibich, a founding member of the Czechoslovak

Communist Party. Krno and perhaps other young Communists at the embassy thought he was too old and preoccupied with the past, with the struggles of the working class in Austro-Hungary.⁴⁷⁴ Kreibich served as ambassador in Moscow for two and a half years. In December 1952 he was replaced by Jaromír Vošahlík, who held the post until 21 January 1959. The last groups of prisoners of war and of civilians deported from Czechoslovakia were repatriated on the grounds of the amnesty after Stalin's death during Vošahlík's time in office. Krno compared all four ambassadors with whom he worked in Moscow and concluded that Laštovička did the best work there.⁴⁷⁵

After he had been recalled from Moscow, Laštovička held the post of deputy minister of defense (1950–1952) for two years. After that he was removed from political life (1952–1957). Only after the onset of de-Stalinization in the wake of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union did Laštovička reappear on the political scene. From 1957 to 1961 he was editor-in-chief of *Nová mysl* (New thinking) and later the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1961–1964). He was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1962–1971), a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee (1964–1968), chairman of the National Assembly (1964–1968) and from 1969 a member of the Chamber of the People. He died on 30 March 1981 in Prague.

“As a Communist, First I Was Alone Like a Soldier in the Field”:

Miloš Krno

The young Slovak Communist Miloš Ruppeldt was behind many decisions regarding staff at the postwar Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He began his career as a personal secretary of the secretary of state at the Foreign Ministry, Vladimír Clementis. These two men undoubtedly represented a strong Communist influence group. Ruppeldt looked for suitable personnel for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was behind the appointment of Miloš Krno to a high position at the Moscow embassy. Krno was sent there after a very basic training in the ministry, so there could be at least one Party member at the embassy.

Miloš Krno was born in 1922 and when he started working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was just twenty-three years old. Thanks to his Communist background and his friendship with Ruppeldt—with whom he had shared an apartment and who was a colleague in Vladimír Clementis's secretariat—Krno went to Moscow with the rank of first secretary.

There was a tense moment during his first official meeting with Ambassador Horák, who knew that Krno was a Communist. The ambassador and his wife told Krno that they both hoped that despite his revolutionary convictions he would act within the limits of democracy and that the ambassador represented the president and his policies. Immediately after the Communist takeover in 1948, Miloš Krno established an "Action Committee" at the embassy and in its name called on Ambassador Horák to resign. Horák despised him so much for this that he refused to shake his hand when he said good-bye to the embassy staff before leaving for Prague.⁴⁷⁶

As first secretary, Krno had a strong influence on the repatriation agenda. According to many testimonies, the deported did not have good memories of his activity. Party political activities were not allowed in embassies. However, the Communists always operated along the guidelines of their party. Krno was sent to Moscow so the Party could have their man there "to start with." As soon as the third secretary, Evžen Malý (according to Krno a pedantic expert in the consular agenda), and Anna Strnadová, both of them Communists, joined the embassy, they founded a Party cell. The number of Communists at the embassy subsequently grew to about eight. Krno was pleased with this development: "In the beginning, I was the only Communist at the embassy in Moscow, alone as a soldier in the field, nevertheless, close to our Soviet friends."

***"A Gift from the Lord or, Not Everything Was a Joy for Me":
Václav Vaško⁴⁷⁷***

Václav Vaško (1921–2009) arrived in Moscow on 15 June 1945. He was about the same age as Krno, but his convictions were completely different. Krno was an ardent Communist, Vaško a practicing Catholic. Vaško was later to become a political prisoner, held in the uranium mines at Jáchymov and in the Leopoldov and Mírov prisons. Krno became a successful diplomat and writer, who later fully identified with the normalization regime in Czechoslovakia after 1968. The following quotation does not need any comment: "An honest, well-informed man could not for a single moment consider the friendly fraternal hand of the nations of the Soviet Union that stopped the bloody counterrevolution in our country in 1968, as the hand of an occupier."⁴⁷⁸

There was also a great difference in their position at the embassy. Krno was immediately appointed first secretary, while Vaško joined the embassy as a cipher clerk with the rank of an attaché. He was also in charge

of the reconstruction of the records office and finally in charge of the repatriation desk. In his memoirs, Vaško writes.⁴⁷⁹

My new work was a gift from the Lord. It taught me about the reality of the Soviet Union, the inhumanity of socialism of the Stalinist kind. It also taught me to perceive more sensitively than before the concerns and grief of my fellow men. Every day I was receiving requests to search for our citizens unlawfully abducted from our territory by the Soviets in the last months of the war, Russian émigrés, soldiers of various armies who took part in the campaign against the Soviet Union and whose relatives did not know whether they were killed or taken prisoners. There were also desperate letters from the former Subcarpathian Rus and from the Volhynia region, in which wives and children of our soldiers asked in vain to be reunited with their husbands and fathers. No less heartbreaking, because hopeless, were pleas from Czechs and Slovaks who lost our citizenship, either from compulsion—after Stalin's pact with Hitler in 1939—or naïveté, like, for example, the members of the Communist cooperative Interhelpe, who came to help the country where, in Fučík's words, "tomorrow means yesterday."⁴⁸⁰

In April 1946, Vaško was recalled to headquarters and worked in several departments and sections at the ministry. In 1947 he worked in the courier service for Moscow, which he very much appreciated because it gave him the opportunity to be with his Russian wife—whose applications for expatriation to Czechoslovakia the Soviet authorities had been repeatedly turning down, despite the fact they had a child.⁴⁸¹

At the end of October 1947 Vaško rejoined the embassy in Moscow, although just as a temporary aide. He recorded in his memoirs how, in the second half of 1947, the persecution psychosis among the officials of the embassy grew, how the staff changed for the worse, and how they were gradually seized by fear. After February 1948 Vaško continued his work on the repatriation agenda and the search for missing Czechoslovak citizens. He could not escape the infiltration of the Czechoslovak diplomatic service by the Communists and was recalled to headquarters. He left Moscow on 3 July 1949, without his wife and daughter, who were forbidden by the Soviet authorities to leave the country. It was to be twenty years before he saw his daughter again, in 1968.

Vaško again worked at the ministry and stayed there for some time, despite the continuing purges, arrests and simultaneous hiring of new "reinforcements." He was first in the Soviet Department, the head of which was Robert Schmelz who knew Vaško from Moscow. In the Soviet Department Vaško was again in charge of the repatriation agenda, that is the same agenda he had been responsible for in Moscow. Here he could see it "from the other side." However, the agenda was gradually taken away from him and he spent a frustrating year and a half at the ministry.⁴⁸² He was a practicing Roman

Catholic, and the ministry was gradually being made a Communist stronghold; one purge followed another and employees of the ministry were expected to show loyalty to the Communist regime. The Catholic clergy, among whom Vaško's family had close friends, were persecuted. Vaško underwent political schooling, while being obliged to carry out voluntary work. In March 1950 Artur London was arrested and Vladimír Clementis dismissed, and on 14 February 1951 Vaško was dismissed for lack of trust.

Career Diplomats, Communist Apparatchiks, and the Repatriation Agenda

Between 1945 and 1948 twenty-five people worked at the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. There were several highly qualified non-Communist diplomats, who would have certainly become prominent personalities of Czechoslovak diplomacy if it had not been for the Communist takeover in 1948. These diplomats were negotiating the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens with the Soviet authorities and made an extraordinary effort. There were also eight members of the Communist Party and others who sympathized with Communists.

Second in the embassy hierarchy was Counselor Jiří Kašpárek, who in 1945 replaced Jaroslav Hnízdo from World War II, who retired. Miloš Krno considered Ambassador Horák as an impractical pedantic professor; however, Kašpárek was according to him a "cunning reactionary." Václav Vaško, on the other hand, remembers Kašpárek as a model diplomat.⁴⁸³ Kašpárek played an important role in the negotiations regarding abducted Czechoslovak citizens and often actively supported Vaško, who was as an attaché charged with this agenda. After the Communist takeover, Ambassador Laštovička had Kašpárek recalled to Prague. In the end, Kašpárek succeeded in emigrating to the United States.

Another diplomat who did a lot of work during the repatriation negotiations was the Slovak first secretary, Ludovít Mičátek. Mičátek spoke five or six languages and was an expert on Russian culture. Soon after the Communist takeover Mičátek was recalled from Moscow and in the end dismissed from the Foreign Ministry. Krno's description of the later fate of this educated and promising man sends shivers down one's spine: "After the February events he realized that he did not understand the life of our working class, that he had spent his life buried in books, and volunteered for work in industrial production."⁴⁸⁴

Emil B. Štefan was originally sent to Moscow as a correspondent of the Czechoslovak Press Agency. He was later appointed counselor-envoy.

After February 1948 Štefan “turned out to be an enemy of our country.”⁴⁸⁵ In this book we see him as the diplomat who was negotiating with Golubev and after his return from Moscow worked for some time as the head of the Soviet Department of the Foreign Ministry. It was Štefan who heard from Golubev that the Soviet Union was stopping repatriations because it considered them to have been concluded.

Emil Schulz was sent to the embassy in Moscow as a cipher clerk directly from London in the summer of 1945. Emil Šulc (as his name was often spelled) proved his ability in screening of the repatriates and accomplished—to the satisfaction of Czechoslovak and Soviet authorities—several missions in the repatriation camp in Luisdorf near Odessa.

The embassy’s annual report for the year 1950 gives a vivid picture of the repatriation agenda at the embassy in Moscow.⁴⁸⁶ It is clear that at that time the question of deported persons and Czechoslovak citizens still interned in the Soviet Union was clearly marginal.

The report also shows how the purges after the Communist takeover affected the embassy staff. The Foreign Affairs section was supposed to consist of an ambassador, a minister plenipotentiary, five officials in the Policy Department, two officials in the Press Department, one official/head of the Consular Department, three clerks in the Consular Department, six secretaries and typists, and other staff. However, at the beginning of 1949 there were just the ambassador, his deputy, two clerks and one typist. During the year new staff were arriving from Prague, selected according to the criteria of the new Communist regime.

The annual report for that year lists among other agenda items no. 16: “Negotiations about the repatriation and reemigration of Czechoslovak citizens.” However, just as this agenda faded away in reality, it also inconspicuously disappeared from the report. Item no. 16 refers to a summary of activities of the Consular Department for a more detailed report. There is indeed a paragraph, “Internees and Prisoners of War,” which states that an official of the Consular Department is in charge of the agenda related to “other ongoing problems, continuing since the end of the war.” There are no further details as the issue is allegedly dealt with in Appendix no. 8. However, Appendix no. 8 deals with “Political Training”! It is not a mistake in the numbering of the appendixes because there is no mention of internees and prisoners of war in any of the other appendixes. The repatriation agenda had simply vanished from the report. The report states that after the departure of the attaché Václav Vaško, the staff numbers of the embassy are being completed according to Ambassador Laštovička’s proposal. After Vaško’s departure no one was charged with

this agenda, so henceforth it was dealt with along with various other consular matters. The same thing happened later in Prague. Vaško was in charge of the repatriation agenda there. After Vaško's dismissal, his agenda was not assigned to anyone and thus vanished.

III. THE OFFICIAL TERMINATION OF REPATRIATION AND THE EPILOGUE

1. Reaction of Czechoslovak Institutions, Numbers and Reports

The USSR Brings an End to Repatriation, 29 June 1948

On 29 June 1948 the head of the 4th European Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, A.M. Alexandrov, received Counselor Kašpárek, to give him official notification that the Soviet Union considered the repatriation from its territory to be complete. Alexandrov later wrote a minute on the meeting which has survived in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.⁴⁸⁷ The minute reads:

I informed Kašpárek that recently there has been an increasing flood of notes from his embassy accompanied by a pile of lists of persons of Czechoslovak ethnicity who are allegedly to be found in prisoner-of-war and detention camps in the USSR. In connection with this I was forced to inform him that during 1946–1947 the competent organs of the Soviet Union worked extremely hard to find and repatriate to Czechoslovakia a considerable number of Czechoslovak citizens who for various reasons caused by the war had found themselves in the USSR. As announced in the memorandum of 8 September 1947 handed over by the Soviet ambassador in Prague to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, in the context of repatriation the Soviet repatriation organs sent to Czechoslovakia more than 90,000 Czechoslovak citizens including more than 50,000 prisoners of war and internees. Up until 8 September 1947 approximately 1,500 prisoners of war and Czech and Slovak internees were found on the territory of the USSR. These have been up to the present, as already announced by our repatriation organs, repatriated to Czechoslovakia. At the present time there are no Czechoslovak citizens on the territory of the USSR who would have found their way here during the war, and therefore the relevant organs of the Soviet Union will no longer concern themselves with people on the composite lists sent by the ambassador of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

Kašpárek had no choice but to accept this announcement, express his regret that the Soviet authorities will no longer concern themselves with

people the embassy had on its lists, and to inform his superiors of this unilateral Soviet decision.

It was now time for a program of recapitulation, evaluation, numbers and tables in the repatriation agenda between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. In 1945 Czechoslovakia had diligently tried to compile lists of the deported. Now, in 1949, they tried to put together the number of the repatriated. In both cases they came up against defective data from the Soviets and against the inconsistency and unwillingness of the Soviet authorities to cooperate in the documentation of these missing persons.

Soviet Data

A report from the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow of 12 October 1948, prepared by Václav Vaško and Chargé d'Affaires Šulc (Schulz), informed the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the startling data concerning the number of repatriated Czechoslovak citizens which Golubev had given to the Czechoslovak diplomats. According to Golubev, altogether 91,560 persons had been repatriated to Czechoslovakia since the end of the war, of which 55,517 were prisoners of war and internees.⁴⁸⁸ Understandably, no one could authenticate these numbers.

Let us stop and think more deeply about these figures. 91,560 persons is an unreasonably high number which should be specified more exactly. Nothing is written as to whether these were repatriations only from the Soviet Union or from other countries as well. If this number included prisoners from concentration camps and persons doing forced labor, then of course the number of repatriated persons could have been quite high. For us, however, this number means nothing because we cannot relate it to the number of persons repatriated from the Soviet Union. Likewise the number of 55,517 prisoners of war and internees tells us almost nothing. Very probably this concerned repatriates to Czechoslovakia as a whole, not only from the Soviet Union but from other countries which had been liberated by the Red Army. But who were they? Soldiers of the Slovak Army were engaged on the Eastern front and were for the most part repatriated from the Soviet Union, and there are quite certainly soldiers of the Slovak Army in the given number. Prisoners of war of Hungarian and German ethnicity were essentially disqualified from repatriation to Czechoslovakia. However, a certain number of Sudeten Germans and Slovak Hungarians did return to Czechoslovakia. The given numbers show us not so much the number of repatriated persons as the problems met by those in charge of the repatriation agenda and wanted to get to the

bottom of the situation. However, another interesting question occurs to us. If 91,560 persons were repatriated of which 55,517 were prisoners of war and internees (little more than half), who were the others? Here we have more than 38,000 people repatriated who were neither prisoners of war nor internees; so who were they? One answer can be that they were people seized from Czechoslovakia for forced labor in regions then belonging Germany which were later occupied by the Red Army. Another category could be prisoners in concentration camps liberated by the Red Army.

I would like to make a brief observation, even though there is no proof for it. We can see that the Soviets visibly speeded up repatriation around mid-1948. The Soviet Union could not entirely ignore the international treaty it had signed, which said that after 31 December 1948 it would not hold any prisoners of war on its territory. Apart from this, it was not in the interests of the Soviet Union to keep so many thousands of malnourished and exhausted prisoners of war and deported civilians in its forced labor camps any longer. We know that the repatriations were not carried out in full, that many people never left the internment camps of the Soviet Union; we know that the Soviet Union, in spite of being presented with proof, refused to admit for a long time after the deadline had been passed that it held captured and deported foreign civilians. In the vast spaces of the Soviet Union it was very difficult to ascertain the truth, if the Soviet Union itself did not want to admit anything. Apart from this, the Soviet Union must have been very well aware of the fact that the mortality levels in the prisoner-of-war camps was so shocking it would be impossible to justify them. The Soviet Union would have had to carry out a large repatriation eventually, and one can ask whether the reports of repatriated persons did not give a larger number than really existed, so that on paper at least it approached the point where there would no longer be any prisoners of war or internees on its territory. However, in evaluating the repatriation as a whole the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no other data than Golubev's and so in further documents it adopted his numbers.

Czechoslovak Data

From January 1949, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked on the aggregate number repatriated from the Soviet Union. One of the officials charged with this task was Dr. Antonín Bartoň of the 5th Department. Bartoň had a verbal agreement in advance with Inspector Pech of the Ministry of the Interior who promised him that the Interior could take care of

the data on the repatriated from Bohemia and Moravian Silesia at the request of the Foreign Ministry from the district national committees. On 31 January 1949 Bartoň drafted for the Ministry of the Interior a request to ascertain the “number of returnees from the USSR to the Czechoslovak Republic of prisoners and internees” up to 31 December 1948 or even later. This should as far as possible be divided into categories according to ethnicity, year of return and region; separate lists for prisoners and for internees. He also asked for data on persons who had still not returned from the Soviet Union.

Bartoň wrote that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had the data from Slovakia more or less at its disposal; the data, however, were not complete. Nevertheless, he was expecting now that with the help of the Ministry of the Interior he would complete the data for the whole of Czechoslovakia and would thus reach the total number of persons repatriated, and maybe even of those who had not yet returned. In conclusion, Bartoň expressed the opinion that the complete “number cannot be so considerable that together with the territory of Slovakia it reached the Soviet data, i.e., 55,517 persons.” Bartoň’s data for Slovakia, taken from the report of the Land Headquarters—State Security in Bratislava, 31 December 1948, were as shown in Table 3.⁴⁸⁹

Table 3: Number of Returnees from the USSR (Prisoners of War and Interned)

Hungarians	6,490
Slovaks and of ethnic Slovaks from abroad	5,427
Germans	329
TOTAL	12,246

Even though these data were not complete, and Bartoň was correctly anticipating larger numbers, the increase could not be so great that with the repatriates from the Czech lands it reached the figure the Soviets put together.

On 9 February 1949, the 5th Department, Section 3A, again evaluated the state of repatriation. The document “The Current State of Repatriation of Prisoners of War and Internees in the USSR”⁴⁹⁰ did not bring any new Soviet data, or any new data from Slovakia. We do, however, have interesting data from the Foreign Ministry’s own evidence, from the previously cited reports from 297 police stations of the seventy-three Slovak regions up to 31 January 1949. From this, the Foreign Ministry gained the following information:

Table 4: Foreign Ministry's Summary of Repatriation Based on Reports of Police Stations by Numbers, Years, Nationality, and Districts

Returned in total, including:	9,800 persons
Number of prisoners of war	8,156
Number of internees	1,644

Table 5: Foreign Ministry's Summary of Repatriation Based on Reports of Police Stations by Year of Return

1945	2,505 persons
1946	1,522
1947	1,959
1948	3,619
1949	195

Table 6: Foreign Ministry's Summary of Repatriation Based on Reports of Police Stations by Nationalities

Slovaks	2,699 persons
Ethnic Slovaks from abroad	2,318
Hungarians	4,517
Germans	204
Ruthenians	58
Others	4

Table 7: Foreign Ministry's Summary of Repatriation Based on Reports of Police Stations by Nationalities by Districts with Largest Number of Repatriates

Komárno	808	Jesenské	466
Galanta	700	Kráľ. Chlmec	443
Štúrovo	667	Košice	431
Hurbanovo	493	Dunajská Streda	416

A handwritten table (see the appendix, author's note) prepared on 9 February 1949 by Department 5–3A was inserted into the information for the Foreign Ministry about the current state of repatriation of prisoners of war and internees from the USSR.⁴⁹¹ The question is how far the table reflects reality. If the Czechoslovak authorities did not have enough information even in 1949, it is impossible to find it out now. I believe that even though the overviews do not go into complete detail and some individuals were not represented in the evidence, it is nevertheless possible to work with them as a whole and to consider them more or less realistic

insofar as the number of repatriated is concerned, but problematic from the point of view of distinguishing categories. The issue of prisoners of war and of the deported cannot be completely divided. Even though they form two categories of repatriates, the process of repatriation ran along the same lines. It seems that the proportion of repatriated prisoners of war from Slovakia to the number of repatriated deportees was approximately five to one.

The document also gives information on the transports which the Foreign Ministry was able to record in Košice. Clearly, ministry officials were aware that the data was only partial. Information that the Soviet Union had dispatched transports without notifying the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague runs through the repatriation agenda like a leitmotif. It frequently happened that Czechoslovak officials on the border crossings, above all Chop, were faced with transports of repatriates in a pitiful condition without previous notification.

The atmosphere around repatriation in the second half of 1948 is very well described by Šulc and Vaško's report of 12 October 1948.⁴⁹² Emil Šulc was at that time *chargé d'affaires* at the Moscow embassy and I would judge it was Václav Vaško who wrote this report.

The embassy states that it has no overview of how many prisoners of war and internees were already repatriated to the Czechoslovak Republic. The Soviet repatriation authorities took over the repatriation of these citizens themselves, the majority at the border post of Chop, in the course of which the embassy was not informed about many repatriation transports, especially in 1945 and 1946. From 1946 the repatriation of prisoners of war from the Odessa repatriation camp is carried out in cooperation with our office there, in the course of which the embassy receives reports of persons concentrated there, not, however, of persons transported from Odessa to the Czechoslovak Republic. A large number of prisoners of war and internees is repatriated to the Czechoslovak Republic from the repatriation camp in Sighet in Romania. The embassy does not receive reports of repatriates finding themselves in Sighet and has no information even of their number...

As far as the repatriation of persons who return to the Czechoslovak Republic individually is concerned, the embassy cannot give any information because it only learns about the repatriation of some of them by chance.

It is no wonder that the Soviet Union complained that there was no responsible Czechoslovak official in place to take over the transport. Nor is it any wonder that the repatriates were simply let out of the transport to find their way home, or to flee, without anyone drawing up a list. This made it impossible to provide a final list of all those who had returned.

The Soviet authorities also complained that when they handed over individual Czechoslovak citizens in Chop, they often had to wait two or three days for the Czechoslovak “representative responsible for taking over and delivering the freight.” The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Matters of Repatriation (Golubev’s office) therefore made an official request that a representative or representatives entitled to cross to Chop and take over these repatriates should be permanently stationed on the frontier.⁴⁹³

Chop never got its permanent representative for taking over repatriates. Repatriation officials were always sent ad hoc, when the arrival of a transport was announced, and all the problems with flexibility and efficiency in taking over the repatriates arose. There were many elements involved in taking over transports, and as in the whole process of repatriation, very strict bureaucratic approaches were combined with considerable arbitrariness.

According to the statement of the regional office of the police in Bratislava on 18 November 1949, 12,246 prisoners of war and deportees returned from the USSR between 1945 and 31 December 1948. The records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague showed 10,035 repatriates over the same period, likewise prisoners of war and deportees together.⁴⁹⁴

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had in its evidence that from 1945 to 7 January 1949 a total of 4,256 prisoners of war and internees were taken over from the Soviet authorities at the border post Čierna nad Tisou (in Slovakia, opposite Chop in Ukraine). Of these, there were 931 persons up to 14 September 1948, and 2,495 persons in another seven transports. However, this information did not reflect the real state because a considerable number of prisoners of war and internees returned to Slovakia via Hungary and others came from the Soviet zone of Germany. There were also illegal crossings of the border between Hungary and Slovakia, about which the officials of the Foreign Ministry knew, but could do nothing.

The USSR Definitely Ends Repatriation, 29 April 1949

Repatriation continued, even though Counselor Kašpárek had been told as early as 29 June 1948 that the Soviet Union considered repatriation to be at an end—evidently this announcement was “inspired” by the approaching deadline by which all prisoners of war had to be returned. Nevertheless, the threat of repatriation being halted constantly hung in the air. In the end, on 29 April 1949 (three-quarters of a year after the USSR had announced that

there were no longer any Czechoslovak citizens on its territory), the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow informed the Foreign Ministry by telegram that Chebotarev had officially notified Counselor Emil Štefan that the USSR considered the repatriation of prisoners of war and internees to be at an end: "the Soviet offices will no longer concern themselves with compiled lists of prisoners of war and internees and are willing only to look at individual requests in exceptional circumstances."⁴⁹⁵

What was the reaction of the Czechoslovak authorities? The ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Care had been involved in the agenda since 1947, when the representative of this ministry attended interministerial consultations in the Foreign Ministry about how the repatriation from the Soviet Union should be handled, and in which it had a deciding voice. Dr. Václav Šatava, who attended the consultations in November 1947, appeared to be the key person at the Ministry of Social Care in the repatriation agenda in 1949. On 13 May 1949 Šatava drafted an analysis for his superiors at the Ministry of Social Affairs which reacted to the announcement of the ending of the mass repatriations of prisoners of war and internees from the USSR, and also to the fact that in Chop individual repatriates had to wait several days for "the representative responsible for taking over and delivering the freight," which the Soviet repatriation authorities claimed made their work more difficult. Šatava writes that:

According to previous practice prisoners of war and internees were sent to Košice where up to now a resettlement station organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs has been operating. To fulfill the Soviet request it would in our opinion be appropriate to send a representative from this station to Chop when the case required it and when we were notified by the Soviet side that there are prisoners of war or internees in Chop who need to be handed over.

According to Šatava it would not be complicated to fulfill the requirement—all that was needed was an agreement with the Commissariat of the Interior to determine who would carry out that service on a permanent basis and to pass their names on to the Foreign Ministry so they could grant those persons the right to cross the frontier. At the end of the document, a question is raised regarding the Commissariat of Social Care in Bratislava, that they should express themselves on the subject and chiefly let them know what had already been done concerning this matter.⁴⁹⁶

When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the Soviet Union had officially ended mass repatriation of prisoners of war and internees, the information must have evoked a sensation among the Czechoslovak

authorities concerned with repatriation. It was especially disquieting that the Soviet Union had decided to concern itself in future only with individual requests for repatriation, and only in exceptional cases. Anyone with the slightest knowledge of how Soviet bureaucracy functioned and who was also informed about the state of repatriation, in particular the as yet unsolved cases, must have despaired. If up to now repatriation had been successful only where there was a happy concordance of a number of favorable factors, the chances now became unreal. The Slovak Commissariat of Social Care reacted to this information on 21 May 1949. It asked the Commissariat of the Interior in Bratislava for an agreement to establish the persons who should always travel to Chop to take over individual repatriates as the Soviet side had asked. At the same time, a request from the minister of the interior was handed over, asking that a list of transferred persons should always be prepared which should state in each case (in addition to the name and other basic information) the ethnicity of the repatriate and his family, whether he had been a member of a Nazi organization, and whether the Ministry of the Interior had allowed him repatriation. The person should be informed that he would be punished for membership in any Nazi organization.

An interesting report illuminates the initiative of the Slovak authorities who always tried, in spite of the resistance of the Ministry of the Interior in Prague, to keep their word in the matter of repatriation for citizens of Slovakia. The writer notes that he had the same day talked to Dr. Grék of the Slovak Commissariat of the Interior who told him that there was a consultation at the Commissariat on 30 June 1949 at which it was decided that the Commissariat of the Interior itself would decide about the acceptance or refusal of repatriation of persons from the territory of Slovakia, and that it would "*communicate its decision directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs* and not as previously through the Ministry of the Interior which made the decision on the basis of reports from the Commissariat of the Interior" (emphasis in the original). In the report, however, it was not quite clear when the conversation between the writer and Dr. Grék took place. The rubber stamp on the document is dated December 1949, but apparently as early as June the Slovak authorities for repatriation had decided to manage things themselves—so why would the writer wait to December to note it in his report as new information he had only just received? He goes on to write that Dr. Kropáč was present on behalf of the Interior Ministry at this consultation—did the Interior Ministry then know about this change, and was the Foreign Ministry not yet informed? Most probably that really was the case, because the writer continues:

Since nothing is here known about this new practice (until now the Interior Ministry has been sending its decisions to the Foreign Ministry), I asked Dr. Kropáč in the Ministry of the Interior who confirmed that this agreement had been made but that, *however, it had not yet been implemented*. The implementation will come later, and the Interior Ministry will inform the Foreign Ministry. (Emphasis in the original)

The writer continues that the Foreign Ministry should welcome the new practice, “for it markedly shortens the whole procedure and the agenda will progress more smoothly.” The writer also asked Dr. Grék from the Commissariat of the Interior how it would be concerning the documentation for the returnees. He was relieved to be assured that the Director of State Security in Bratislava would take care of this and that the repatriates would be registered by the appropriate police stations in Slovakia. We should note, however, his final remarks. Dr. Grék said that according to the documents of the Commissariat of the Interior approximately 8,000 prisoners of war and internees from Slovakia had been found in the USSR. That is a considerably greater number than previous information in the documentation to that point.⁴⁹⁷

We noted that in the last phase of repatriation we examined, in 1948 when the process was dramatically speeded up, the ethnic aspect faded into the background. We remember the official memoranda of the Soviet side—that transports of the internees would be sent to Czechoslovakia, that lists of repatriates are irrelevant, and if Czechoslovakia is not interested in them, then these people will be taken to Germany or Hungary. The selective approach of the Czechoslovaks, implemented in an effort to get rid of Germans and Hungarians and to build a pure “Czechoslovak state” did not, however, disappear so easily; on the contrary, it began to make itself heard again in connection with the ending of the process of repatriation. For example, in June 1949 the Legislative Department of the Ministry of National Defense, in reply to the Foreign Ministry’s Letter no. 314.685/49–C/II-3 to all interested ministries, expressed its standpoint for the ending of the repatriations from the Soviet Union. The ministries were asked whether the issue of repatriation from the Soviet Union could be considered to be at an end. For the number of persons who have not yet returned from the Soviet Union, the decisive factor will be whether the repatriation of prisoners of war can be considered to be at an end. There is nothing objectionable about this. However, the letter continues:

At the same time, it should be ascertained what nationality is concerned. If it concerns persons unreliable from the nationality point of view (Germans, Fascist Hungarians),

there is no need to be interested in their return. However, if they are reliable from the nationality point of view, those who will be useful in the building of our people's democratic republic, further negotiations concerning their repatriation are necessary.⁴⁹⁸

This document was signed, on behalf of Minister of National Defense Ludvík Svoboda, by General Dr. Vrbský. The quoted passage is a clear example of the injudicious, ignorant and tendentious use of the term "nationality." Germans and Hungarians are considered to be members of unreliable national minorities. That has to be considered a generalized approach on the basis of collective guilt. The behavior of these national minorities in the past is automatically related to the idea that these persons will not "be useful in the building of our people's democratic republic" so that guilt or failure in the past are anticipated as unreliability in the future. And what does the expression "concerns persons unreliable from the nationality point of view" mean when applied to Germans and Hungarians? In a multiethnic state it is not only disputable but even evidence of unjust national policies. This approach was nevertheless a part of the official policy of the Czechoslovak Republic, which claimed to hold democratic values and tried to instill in people the impression that it was the heir to Masaryk's Czechoslovakia which, as was always emphasized, was the last island of democracy in Central Europe before World War II. Elsewhere in this study I quote Vladimír Clementis, who announced publicly that the aim of postwar Czechoslovakia was to build a national state of Czechs and Slovaks without Germans or Hungarians.

There is a note to the memorandum of the Defense Ministry to the Foreign Ministry which was made, or at least signed, by Marta Gottwaldová-Čepičková, daughter of Klement Gottwald. This note somewhat moderates the categorizing approach of the pronouncement about the ending of repatriation and at least theoretically leaves a door ajar to the future. It says that the Ministry of the Interior agrees to repatriation after a preliminary investigation by the local councils—that was standard procedure previously as well. Repatriation is "*in essence* finished but individuals and small groups, as the case may be, can still be repatriated with the agreement of the embassy" (emphasis in the original).

Final Meeting with Golubev

On 16 May 1949 Laštovička sent to the Foreign Ministry a comprehensive telegram which gives a good outline of the atmosphere of the final phase of repatriation.⁴⁹⁹

On Friday Golubev received Štefan and Vaško. He confirmed the information from the MID, that the repatriation of imprisoned and interned Czechoslovak citizens was essentially ended. Individuals and small groups will be gradually, naturally with the agreement of the embassy, repatriated to Czechoslovakia. Golubev agrees that we should further carry out interventions in the case of those prisoners and internees whose repatriation will be additionally permitted by the Ministry of the Interior, and whose address is known to us. Štefan noted that missing persons in future will not be placed on lists, so that the repatriation office will not be unnecessarily overburdened. Golubev said it very much eased their work if the changes of address of prisoners and internees could be given. In answer to Štefan's request, Golubev stated that according to their records 49,300 persons—of whom 35,538 were liberated citizens, 11,971 prisoners and internees and 1,791 prisoners of war of Hungarian ethnicity—had been repatriated to Czechoslovakia up to now. These data do not accord with those of July 1948. Golubev promised to investigate the matter and to give official information about the number of persons repatriated to Czechoslovakia. Currently held in Soviet repatriation camps are fifteen prisoners, of whom eight are Czechs, five Germans, and two Czechs of German ethnicity who will be repatriated as soon as the embassy agrees. Štefan again requested the speeding up of the repatriation of Dr. Fiedler and Ing. Pásztor,⁵⁰⁰ who are already in Odessa and whose repatriation was not carried out last year through the fault of our own selection organs. Golubev promised to do his best.

In another passage of the telegram, Laštovička describes how Golubev spoke with Štefan about the organization of the takeover of repatriates in Chop. This issue was also on the agenda. According to a preceding agreement with Prague, Štefan now proposed that the repatriates in Chop could be collected by the border patrol, five or six of whom would be authorized to take over both repatriates and war criminals. Golubev agreed with this and Štefan in return thanked him for his previous work in the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens. Golubev repeated his thanks and stated that the Soviet repatriation officer in Prague, Lt. Col. Panov, had been recalled and replaced by Lt. Col. Suprun, who had already taken up his post.

There are two names which cropped up in the conversation of the Czechoslovak diplomats with Golubev. When Counselor Štefan requested the release of the internees Pásztor and Fiedler, he brought up two of the longest lasting cases of repatriation for whose torturous extended stay Czechoslovakia shared responsibility. In the chapter where I dealt with deportations from Slovakia and provided specific examples, I devoted myself to the cases of Ing. Pásztor and Dr. Fiedler in more detail.

To this point, the conversation had proceeded with diplomatic courtesy. The authorization of the Czechoslovak border guards and the promise to release Fiedler and Pásztor meant little to Golubev (however critical it was to the internees themselves, who were spending their fourth year in

the Gulag). However, in the conclusion Golubev proceeded to something which really was significant for the Soviet Union, so much so that in return they were prepared to allow the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens who were still on the territory of the Soviet Union. According to Laštovička's report:

Golubev asked us to pass on his request to the Czechoslovak government for further support and assistance in the repatriation of Soviet citizens living in the Czechoslovak Republic. Golubev continued by saying that lists had to be made of all the Soviet citizens in the Czechoslovak Republic, in the course of which it would be necessary to cooperate with our authorities, especially local authorities. These, perhaps for various reasons personal and otherwise, maybe from sentimentality, show insufficient willingness, especially in cases where it is known that the Czechoslovak people have a positive relationship with Soviet citizens who have settled in the Czechoslovak Republic and often married Czechoslovak women and started a family. Soviet citizens would be invited for interview and a list put together of those who would be repatriated. He was a little rebuking in tone as regards our local authorities and their unwillingness to cooperate in putting together lists of Soviet citizens in the Czechoslovak Republic. The embassy recommends that these authorities be instructed through the Ministry of the Interior to cooperate in an appropriate manner with the Soviet repatriation mission.

Golubev knew the Czechoslovak diplomats very well, since they had been meeting for several years over the repatriation agenda. He had thus built up a relationship with them which enabled him to behave in a friendly way on the surface at least. From time to time, however, the behavior of high officials of the Stalinist regime gave Czechoslovak diplomats the feeling of being overwhelmed by a great power, of experiencing the toughness of the Soviet approach toward its satellites, and its disregard as far as its own citizens were concerned.

Golubev did not hesitate to express dissatisfaction over the fact that the Czechs had not been sufficiently active in handing over their fellow citizens of Russian and Ukrainian origin. We can even read a threat into his note—the failure to report where these people were living could be construed as “sentimentality” which was inadmissible, a mere bourgeois relic in a society led by the Communist Party. Laštovička immediately informed the Czechoslovak authorities how the Soviets regarded the sluggish surrendering of Russians, Ukrainians and the other nationalities that made up the Soviet Union. We should not wonder that the Czechoslovak authorities made great efforts to show themselves to Moscow in a better light.

The Red Cross

Ambassador Horák used all available channels to help the internees. He also tried to use the Soviet Red Cross (and Red Crescent) authorities. For example, on 3 December 1947 he tried to establish contact between the internees and the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow and asked the Red Cross and the Red Crescent to help with delivering letters to the internees. Unfortunately, it became apparent that cooperation with these organizations was even more difficult than with other authorities and Horák's initiative failed completely. I document elsewhere in this book how these organizations did not react even to official correspondence from Czechoslovakia, which was the more tragic in that, after repatriation was officially finished, these were the only institutions authorized to search for persons interned in camps. The embassy asked if it could approach the MID in the event that "cooperation between the Czechoslovak Red Cross and the Soviet Red Cross should be neither successful nor effective."

In 1949 the embassy in Moscow informed Prague that:

After repeated discussions with the representatives of the repatriation office of the USSR and representatives of the MID it was again confirmed that both offices refuse to make the essential steps in the repatriation of prisoners and internees in cases where the Czechoslovak authorities do not have addresses for those they want to be repatriated.

This mainly concerned people who had been dispersed individually among various camps of the Gulag, and who had so far had not managed to send information to Czechoslovakia, as well as people who had no one to send a message to, or who had been prevented from doing so by the Soviet authorities. As was now indicated by the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow to Prague, all cases of searching for individuals including prisoners and internees could be carried out only by the Soviet Red Cross.

Cooperation with the Soviet Red Cross continued to be extremely problematical. The problems are indicated in a critical note from Department A/II-1 of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry approved by Marta Gottwaldová-Čepičková and sent to the embassy in Moscow in July 1949. What mainly emerges from this is that negotiations with the Soviet side about searching for and repatriating prisoners and internees in the USSR whose address was unknown had dragged on for several months, because the letter reacted to a telegram from the embassy dated May 1949.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs returns to the telegram [Laštovička's Telegram no. 710/D of 16 May 1949] and to the communication that "missing persons in future will not be placed in lists so that the repatriation office will not be unnecessarily overburdened," and reminds that it has to be distinguished between persons missing since the end of the war (for example, in those case where only the name of the field post or in the enemy army is known) and prisoners or internees who have made contact from the USSR but did not continue to write to relatives, or about whom it is otherwise known that they really are in the USSR. If the address of these persons is not known to the Repatriation Office or if it does not have any news of them, it does not mean that they should be left to their fate and their search and repatriation not striven for. Results up to now of searching by means of the Red Cross shows that this method of searching is completely ineffective.

According to information from the Czechoslovak Red Cross, which was from the end of November 1948 entrusted with this agenda, no Czechoslovak citizens (fifteen to twenty letters daily sent to the Soviet Red Cross) were found in the USSR and the replies from the USSR are negative. There has been no answer at all for the past three months.

In the interests therefore of speeding up repatriation and bringing it to an end, the authorities there should consider whether in the search for our prisoners and internees who are living in the USSR, a more suitable method might be a request for cooperation from the Repatriation Office of the USSR with a view to the fact that the Czechoslovak authorities (i.e., the Ministry of the Interior) can effectively help in the ascertaining and repatriation of Soviet citizens living in the Czechoslovak Republic. Gen. Golubev, as explained in this telegram, would acknowledge this with recognition.

This mention is a reaction to Ambassador Laštovička's telegram, with information about the visit of Counselor Štefan and Attaché Vaško to Golubev in May when, on the contrary, Golubev complained about the reluctance of the Czechoslovak authorities, the Ministry of the Interior in particular, to hand over to the Soviet Union Russians and Ukrainians who had settled in Czechoslovakia.

To the specific points of the telegram the Ministry of Foreign Affairs adds: "Insisting on the provision of corrected data about the number of persons already repatriated in the Czechoslovak Republic is not recommended." In the original draft this was followed by the sentence: "These data have been given several times and will certainly be incorrect again." This note was deleted in the final version.⁵⁰¹

Policy of Repatriation and Reemigration, 1950

Even in 1950, five years after the end of the war, repatriation issues connected with World War II were still being resolved. The Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior at this time worked out principles according to which the categories "repatriation" and "reemigration" and the attitude to

them would be clearly defined. The principles [shortened by the author] are as follows:⁵⁰²

I. Repatriation

Repatriates are Czechoslovak citizens who between 23 September 1938 and 5 May 1945 left their regular domicile on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic because the territory where they had their domicile was occupied by a foreign power or because they were being harassed by the enemy for reasons of ethnicity, politics or race or because they were being forced to move by the authorities.

- (a) Insofar as is shown by regular documents that they were until then Czechoslovak citizens, there is agreement with their repatriation as long as the applicants have not offended in one of the ways listed below (IV)
- (b) Insofar as they do not have such a document of Czechoslovak citizenship, there will be agreement to repatriate them on production of an identity card that the party was a Czechoslovak citizen (citizen of the Protectorate) to the day they left the Czech Republic, and subsequently did not claim German or Hungarian ethnicity and did not apply for German or Hungarian citizenship. Repatriation will nevertheless be refused if the applicant has offended in one of the ways listed below (IV)

Agreement with repatriation is expressed as the purpose of easing return to the person's home country. Every Czechoslovak citizen has the right to return to the Czechoslovak Republic on a valid Czechoslovak passport.

II. Reemigrants are citizens of a foreign country or stateless persons of Czech or Slovak ethnicity (or of other Slavonic ethnicity) and members of their families who were born abroad and have never entered the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, or who have entered the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic but before the Liberation permanently settled abroad again or who were born in the Czechoslovak Republic and before the Liberation moved away and while abroad acquired foreign citizenship or lost their Czechoslovak citizenship.

In the case of reemigrants of other Slavonic ethnicities a further condition is a close family relationship with a person of Czech or Slovak ethnicity or previous long-term residence in the Czechoslovak Republic.

Those who do not belong here ... include former Czechoslovak citizens who claimed to be German or Hungarian without being forced to do so or who applied for German or Hungarian citizenship.

Repatriation will nevertheless be refused if the applicant has offended in one of the ways listed below (IV).

III. Special provisions

- (a) The repatriation and reemigration of elderly persons and those incapable of work who are not entitled to a pension or insurance in Czechoslovakia who would be reliant on social support is allowed only in exceptional circumstances when a Czechoslovak citizen or legal person will take care of their physical needs and look after them until their death. The Ministry of the Protection of Labor and Social Care can allow exceptions only in very extraordinary circumstances.

- (b) In the case of the repatriation and reemigration of orphans younger than fifteen years each case will be considered on its own merit. It is for the Ministry of the Interior first to decide and in cases where they have decided positively they (the Ministry of the Interior) will hand the relevant documents to the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Care for further administration
- (c) Owing to the long-term Germanization of the Hlučín and Těšín regions, persons from those regions are to be treated leniently

IV. By “having offended” it is understood that the applicants:

- (a) are criminals from habit or profession
- (b) have behaved against the interests and guiding principles of the Czechoslovak Republic, that is, especially:
 1. Members of the SS, FS (Freiwillige Schutzstaffeln), the Sudetendeutschen Freikorps, or officials of the NSDAP, SDP, DP, SA or other elements of the NSDAP
 2. Members of enemy security services or any sort of enemy armed and military organized units whose task was to support the aims of Nazism or Fascism
 3. Officers or noncommissioned officers of enemy armed powers
 4. Members of enemy armed powers decorated for courage under fire and zealous service in the face of the enemy

V. In the course of coming to an agreement concerning repatriation or reemigration it has to be kept in mind especially whether the applicant is not work-shy, whether he intends to work especially in one of the unpopular occupations, and whether he has a positive attitude to the people's democratic regime.

VI.⁵⁰³

...with prisoners of war of German ethnicity and of deported Germans, in the case of separated marriages or families when one of the married couple or one member of the family remained in the Czechoslovak Republic and are Czechoslovak citizens of Czech or German ethnicity, it is necessary to carry out an investigation into their behavior during the occupation and if no other facts are apparent than that the person concerned is of German ethnicity, the documents should be sent to the section BA of the Ministry of the Interior before a decision is made. A similar approach should be taken in case of illegal crossings of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia.

Owing to the long-term Germanization of the Hlučín and Těšín regions, prisoners of wars from those regions are to be treated leniently.

There was an appendix to the document modifying the reemigration of persons who had before 23 September 1938 permanently settled abroad without losing their Czechoslovak citizenship. These persons had to show a valid Czechoslovak passport or certificate of Czechoslovak citizenship issued after 10 August 1945. It was naturally essential for reemigration that they had not violated point IV above.

On 5 May 1950, these principles together with some other recommendations by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Gertruda Sekaninová-Čákrťová were distributed within the Foreign Ministry and to all embassies. The deputy minister announced that the mass reemigration of Czechs and Slovaks from abroad to their country at the expense of the state and on the account of the Ministry of Social Care ended on 31 December 1949.⁵⁰⁴ After this date only individual returns would be permitted on the account of this ministry, and only to applicants who had applied before 1 January 1950 and whose application had not yet been processed. It was not forbidden to request reemigration or repatriation after 1 January 1950; applicants had to fill in prescribed forms and to submit them through the appropriate Czechoslovak mission abroad which had in each case to attach its testimonial for the Ministry of the Interior. In drawing up these testimonials, the mission had to be based on the principles for repatriation and reemigration of the Ministry of the Interior. However, this material was for internal use only. Sekaninová-Čákrťová emphasized that no applicant should be allowed to see it, nor should it be quoted.

If we read this instruction, we get the erroneous impression that persons who in 1950 found themselves in the Soviet Union and who wanted to return to Czechoslovakia needed only to complete a form in triplicate at the embassy and then wait for the decision of the Ministry of the Interior about which—as long as the applicant had not been a member of the SS—he would have had no great worries. It may have appeared that the mere fact of German ethnicity would not matter too much. However, we know from other sources, that to achieve repatriation was a labor of Sisyphus which even for people not “weighed down by sins” with regard to their conduct in World War II must have been very hard to manage. It was one thing to fill in a form at the embassy—though even that was not easy for people who found themselves in Siberia or some other distant part of the Soviet Union. However, there was another essential condition—the Soviet Union had to be willing to release the person concerned and we know from many specific cases that the Soviets were often unwilling to do this. After the wave of repatriations in 1948 had ended, during which the Soviet Union had tried to send home as many prisoners of war as possible from the repatriation camps to avoid criticism from the Western powers that they were not fulfilling the agreement about the release of prisoners of war, the situation changed again. The Soviet system functioned on the principle of collectives. A large group of prisoners of war had a better chance—often not even being specially screened but simply sent over the frontier—than an individual application for repatriation passed endlessly

from office to office, requiring always more certificates and screenings, and in the end easily lost.

With reference again to Sekaninová-Čákrťová's letter of instructions: it reminds the missions abroad that in the case of persons of pensionable age and without means the mission must obtain confirmation from their relations in Czechoslovakia that they will take complete care of them, and that the repatriate or reemigrant may not bring more than 500 crowns. The time limit for presenting an application for Czechoslovak citizenship was extended to 31 December.

A stop was put to this by the closing of the Czechoslovak–Soviet Agreement on State Citizenship on 5 October 1957, according to which persons living in the Soviet Union and deciding to choose Czechoslovak citizenship had to do it at the latest by 21 July 1959, or else they would be considered to be citizens of the USSR. This was matched by persons living in the Czechoslovak Republic who decided to choose Soviet citizenship.⁵⁰⁵ Not infrequently there were cases where people in the USSR who had originally been Czechoslovak citizens, who had longed for years to return to their own country and who had not managed to do so, definitively lost even the possibility, because they did not know about the Agreement on State Citizenship and were too late for the deadline.

The End of the Desk for Repatriation from the USSR at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In 1945 minutes of meetings in the Soviet Department of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, i.e., the department which included the desk for Czechoslovak–Soviet relations, documented the final phase of the agenda of the repatriation of prisoners of war and deportees from the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Department the agenda was “barely alive” and its importance was at this time already considerably reduced.

The minutes of August 1950 show that the repatriation documents had to be dealt with by Comrade Machová, because Václav Vaško, who had been working on this issue for five years and was incontestably the most erudite official, had with other colleagues been given the task of combining selected articles from the Soviet press into a digest of the Soviet press. A considerable amount of the department's time was spent on cutting out articles from Soviet newspapers and pasting them up, together with associated organizational matters (who would stand in for who in the case of absence, who would be responsible for deadlines in processing the articles, who would archive the articles and so on). That was all sorted out in

daily meetings. Soviet newspapers were ordered in large quantities, studied, discussed, assessed in writing, articles were cut out, the cuttings were sorted. The Soviet press became the most authoritative of the information services. It formulated thinking on varied issues and determined the "truth."

Václav Vaško got back to the repatriation agenda shortly before his dismissal from the ministry. In the minutes from the meeting of the Soviet Department of 7 September 1950 it appears that Václav Vaško was given the task of preparing material about the prisoners of war for Minister of Foreign Affairs Viliam Široký, who requested it for his participation in the United Nations General Assembly. The gathering of material for Široký was designated one of the most important tasks of the department, which immediately began to collect news reports from the periodical *Novoe vremya* of 1949 and 1950. However, the General Assembly of the UN traditionally sits in September and to start work on the essential material in the first week of September was fairly pointless. Vaško was of course only a desk officer of the lowest rank and could have had no conceptual responsibilities concerning the material for the General Assembly of the UN. On 11 September 1950 he asked at a working meeting of the department that the department be given temporary assistance for translation into English for that day. To give his request a better chance of success he referred to "today's increased work performance on the occasion of the Day of Miners." He also announced that he had to go to the National Library to look for more material for the required documentation—apparently the ministry did not own a complete 1949 set of the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*.

Apart from working on the basic material for the UN, however, Vaško was gradually detached from the administration of the repatriation agenda. First Comrade Machová was in charge of it, then Machová had to help Trejbalová "in disposing of the backlog concerning repatriation and re-emigration of Czechoslovak citizens from the USSR." In the end, on 4 October 1950, a minute appears that "Comrade Vaško is helping to instruct Comrade Tománek, for whom he should clarify the issues of repatriation, reemigration and searching for citizens in the Soviet Union." This training of a colleague signaled his coming dismissal. After Václav Vaško had been dismissed from the ministry, this agenda was not handed to anyone as an integral desk. The continued internment of a considerable number of deported Czechoslovak civilians and prisoners of war in forced labor camps in the USSR was ignored and repatriation was from then on administered only ad hoc.

2. The Repatriation Obligations of the USSR and International Diplomacy

The Initiative of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain and Australia

On 23 April 1947, the governments of the United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union decided at a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow that:

1. German prisoners of war finding themselves on the territory of the Allied Powers and on whatsoever other territory will be returned to Germany by 31 December 1948.
2. The repatriation of German prisoners of war will be carried out according to a plan which will be worked out by the Control Council at the latest by 1 July 1947.⁵⁰⁶

The Western Allies met the deadline well in advance. The Soviet Union, however, was criticized internationally:

The Soviet Union not only has failed to fulfill its commitments but in the note of June 4 attempts by misrepresentation to place the blame for Soviet failure to complete repatriation upon the governments of the United States, Great Britain and France. Four years after the termination of hostilities with Germany there still remain in Soviet custody several hundred thousand German prisoners of war. The Soviet Union makes no mention in this note of any plans to return to their homes this large number of unrepatiated German prisoners of war.⁵⁰⁷

The Soviet note of 4 June 1949 mentioned here is not to be found in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague since it was not intended for the Czechoslovak government and probably the ministry was not even copied on it. We therefore have to content ourselves with an English abstract published by the US Department of State:

The Soviet government cannot agree with arguments brought forward in embassy's note in justification of disruption by governments of United States, Great Britain and France of preparation of plan for repatriation of German war prisoners. Considerations brought forward in this note do not disprove indisputable fact that plan in connection with which repatriation of German prisoners should have been carried out was not worked out by Control Council through fault of representatives of the United States, Great Britain and France.

The Soviet government again affirms that in virtue of facts brought forward in the memorandum of the Soviet government dated January 24, 1949, it does not see any necessity to enter into further examination of questions raised in the note of the US embassy of 15 March 1949.⁵⁰⁸

The Soviet Union briskly denied any possibility of there still being prisoners of war on its territory, saying that even the response of the prisoners of war demonstrated the mendacity of the accusation of the Western states. Allegedly, scores of them rendered speeches of deep thanks to Stalin and the Soviet government for their humane treatment, promising that after their return they would struggle to fortify the peace camp and friendship with the Soviet Union. Information about 66,434 Japanese prisoners of war who expressed their thanks to Stalin was published by TASS on 6 May 1950. This information was subsequently cited and used as an argument by the diplomats of Communist Czechoslovakia.⁵⁰⁹

It is possible that the basis for these reports by TASS was the “Dokladnaya zapiska Kruglova i Vyshinskogo ob okonchanii repatriatsii iz SSSR nemetskikh i yaponskikh voennoplennykh” (Memo of Kruglov and Vyshinsky on the Completion of the Repatriation of German and Japanese Prisoners of War from the USSR), signed on 5 March 1950, since there are attached in its appendices “Proekty postanovleniy Soveta ministrov SSSR o repatriatsii poslednikh grup voennoplennykh” (Projects of Resolutions of the Soviet of the Ministers of the USSR about the Repatriation of the Last Groups of Prisoners of War) and “Soobshchenie TASS ob okonchanii repatriatsii” (Announcement of TASS on the Ending of Repatriation) and there are further lists of POW generals included in repatriation who should be brought to trial and handed over to the governments of Czechoslovakia and China.⁵¹⁰ The reliability of official announcements is seen in a comparison of this material by Kruglov and Vyshinsky, where they talk about the repatriation of the last groups of prisoners of war, with an appendix to one Soviet file consisting of thirteen folders of an index of prisoners of war and internees found in the camps and the special hospitals of the UPVI MVD SSSR to March 1952.⁵¹¹

Let us return to the Soviet note. Australia, Great Britain and the United States reacted to the Soviet Union’s position on 20 August 1950 first by telegram and later with a letter to the secretary-general of the United Nations, Trygve Lie. It was signed by Keith Shann for Australia, Gladwyn Jebb for the United Kingdom and Warren R. Austin for the United States. On the basis of this letter the matter was put on the agenda of the 5th Meeting of the General Assembly of the UN. The essence of the matter was this:

At the end of hostilities in Europe and in the Far East in 1945, large numbers of military personnel of various nationalities were in the hands of the Allied Powers. The prompt repatriation of these prisoners was demanded by accepted international practice and no less by the elementary principles of humanity.

The Allied Powers clearly recognized at the outset this responsibility and entered into agreements to repatriate prisoners of war... The Soviet Union has not complied fully with these agreements. Moreover, the other governments concerned have on various occasions requested the USSR to furnish information concerning its repatriation programs and have even in certain cases offered transportation facilities for repatriation. However, on 22 April 1950 and 5 May 1950, TASS announced that the USSR had completed the repatriation of all Japanese and German prisoners of war from its territories except for persons detained in connection with war crimes or on account of illness. Evidence exists to show that these statements are not true. Moreover, the Japanese Diet on 2 May 1950 and the Bundestag on 5 May 1950 adopted resolutions protesting these announcements and appealing for every possible assistance to bring about an early settlement of the problem.

On the basis of the evidence of the Soviet noncompliance, governments having control responsibility in Germany and Japan have on various occasions stated to the Soviet government their inability to give credence to the TASS announcements, and have requested it to agree to the designation of an international humanitarian body or organization which should make a thorough examination of the repatriation program at firsthand.

Since all these efforts have been without avail, the governments of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States now consider it essential to place the matter before the General Assembly under Articles 10, 14 and 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter. The three governments hope that the General Assembly will consider means whereby full information on all these persons may be obtained and the repatriation of all those now living may be secured.

Ten appendices which concerned German and Japanese prisoners of war were attached to this communication to the General Assembly. This memorandum became the basis of material for the General Assembly of the UN of 28 August 1950, whose labeling was precise: "Failure of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to Repatriate or Otherwise Account for Prisoners of War Detained in Soviet Territory."⁵¹²

Viliam Široký's Documentation for the UN General Assembly

The preparation of the documents for Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Viliam Široký was the responsibility of Václav Vaško. However, it was not part of Vaško's job to prepare reports on the repatriation of Czechoslovak deported civilians and prisoners of war. He had to collect materials in support of the Soviet Union, criticized by the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Australia for having failed in its commitments regarding the repatriation of prisoners of war from its territory. The Czechoslovak documents had apparently to be corroborative material for the needs of the Soviet delegation, called upon to explain the Soviet Union's apparent guilt.

What Czechoslovakia should have done at this point was to take advantage of the international forum to unmask the Soviet policy of deporting civilians from Czechoslovakia and to put pressure on the Soviet Union to carry out full repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens. The Czechoslovaks, although they would have been able to produce conclusive evidence of the procedures of the Soviet Union, did not dare to do so. It seems that this possibility was not even considered in the period between May 1945 and February 1948 (insofar as no documentation or evidence has been found suggesting that the issue of the deportation of Czechoslovak civilians might be raised at an international forum). Instead of this, Czechoslovakia began to choose which of their citizens was of greater or lesser interest to them. Czechoslovakia never exposed the Soviet Union's policies on a broad international platform or organized an influential international initiative with other countries who had similarly suffered the deportation of their civilians.

Václav Vaško wrote about his final task at the Foreign Ministry:

Clementis's successor as foreign minister was Viliam Široký. I never met him. When in the autumn of 1950 he was for the first time getting ready for the meeting of the General Assembly of the UN, our department prepared documents for him on some points on the agenda; I was responsible for those concerning the repatriation of prisoners of war from the USSR and the mass grave at Katyn'. I had no problems with preparing the information for the first. In the second case, even when reading the Soviet sources, I became convinced that they, and not the Germans, had murdered the Polish officers and not the Germans. Naturally, I couldn't write that openly and so I wrote—hoping that someone would interpret it correctly—that the Soviets had turned down an international commission which would have investigated the matter on the grounds that a four-member Soviet commission had already conclusively "proved" that the Nazis were guilty.⁵¹³

Vaško's paper, "The Repatriation of Prisoners of War from the USSR: A Report and Documentation for the Meeting of the UN,"⁵¹⁴ was unmistakably marked by the time, circumstances and purpose of its origin. On 15 September 1950, it was handed over to the desk officer, Ambrus. Vaško's paper itself, a mere two pages, was supplemented by twenty-four appendices on the basis of which Vaško had compiled the material. They were mainly TASS reports, but included several documents of Western origin sent to the Foreign Ministry. However, the appendices have not survived in their entirety; most of the Western documents are missing, and it is mainly the TASS reports that have survived.

The British Note of 14 July 1950

There were also soldiers of the Slovak Army among the prisoners of war, and since the Soviet Union had bound itself to release the German prisoners of war by a certain date, this commitment should also have applied to the Slovak soldiers and the deported civilians. The Soviet administration always allocated a category of “prisoners of war and internees” which, for example, appears already in the title of the umbrella institution: GUPVI (Glavnoe upravlenie voennoplennykh i internirovannykh [Chief Administration of Prisoners of War and Internees]). The process of their repatriation often ran parallel—they reached the repatriation camps of Luisdorf and Sighet in Romania together, and there were many deported civilians among the prisoners of war. On 14 July 1950, the British embassy sent the Soviet government a note about the repatriation of German prisoners of war. The British government, in cooperation with the governments of Australia and the United States, asked the Soviet Union to give true and precise information about the number of German prisoners of war in the Soviet Union and their fates. It says in remarkably sharp words that the official announcement of TASS of 5 May 1950 about the complete ending of the repatriation of German prisoners of war, with the exception of 9,717 persons who were apparently convicted of war crimes and 3,815 persons who were being investigated for war crimes, and with the exception of 14 persons (sic) who were said to be sick, caused shock and serious concerns in the whole of the civilized world. The note announces that this Soviet affirmation is in clear conflict with the known fact that a large number of war criminals were still held in the Soviet Union and refers to research carried out by the German Federal Republic according to which there should be some tens of thousands of people. The note from Great Britain states that “the Soviet Union has demonstrated complete disregard for the principles of common humanity” and calls on it to respect the commitments and treaties it had signed. The Soviet Union is challenged to give detailed information about (a) persons who according to the Soviet Union are convicted of war crimes, (b) persons who are being investigated for war crimes and (c) those who are ill. Great Britain also requested the right to correspond with families, information about all persons who the Soviet government had moved from the category of prisoners of war to the category of civilian laborers, and information about the death of German prisoners of war. In conclusion, the British government asked the Soviet Union to agree with the setting up of an impartial international commission. It proposed that this could be set up ad hoc by the UN and be

made up of representatives of the four victorious powers, or neutral states, or any other mutually acceptable commission. This could, according to the Geneva Convention of 27 July 1929 which the Soviet Union had signed,⁵¹⁵ investigate in situ the status of prisoners of war known still to be in the Soviet Union.

The note further emphasized that when Great Britain, the United States and France had been holding prisoners of war they provided full information about them and allowed international agencies full and impartial contact. However, the most important paragraph of the note for this study was the penultimate:

Although confining themselves at present to the question of German prisoners of war, His Majesty's government cannot disregard, and are likewise disturbed by the failure of the Soviet government to repatriate or to account for numerous nationals of former German occupied countries taken prisoner or brought to the Soviet Union as civilian internees during the war.

The note concerns Czechoslovak civilians, too, even though it does not expressly say so. Little could be changed concerning their fate, but we should be aware that it was Great Britain in cooperation with Australia and the United States which drew attention to these cases and that Czechoslovakia never indicated—not in 1945, 1946, or 1947 (i.e., not before the Communist takeover), nor at any international forum—that there had been any breach of treaties and of its own sovereignty. It did not request correction, nor try to obtain the support of international diplomacy for this justified demand. Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk was not the sort of personality who would initiate an energetic public campaign; on the contrary, according to much of the evidence he showed an exaggerated and even undignified loyalty toward the Soviet Union. He would hardly have convinced anyone that Czechoslovakia's foreign policy was based on Western democratic values and that the country was energetically trying to resist Soviet pressure for it gradually to become a satellite.

3. The Return to Czechoslovakia of Deportees and Prisoners from the USSR after the Official Termination of Repatriation

Twenty-Six Prisoners of War and Internees

Archive documents show that the Soviets' insistence that repatriation had been carried out in full and according to the plan did not correspond to the truth. On 3 December 1951—a full three years after repatriation was supposed to have been finished—Sergei Kruglov and Andrei Gromyko addressed a letter to Stalin.⁵¹⁶ Sergei Nikiforovich Kruglov (1907–1977) was one of the high Stalinist officials. He had behind him a career as a special plenipotentiary of the NKVD (1938–1939); from 1939 he was deputy minister in charge of cadres (personnel) and later first deputy of the People's Commissariat of the Interior; in 1945 he rose to be head of the Commissariat, from 1946 to 1956 was interior minister of the USSR, and in 1960 was expelled from the Communist Party for breaches of socialist legality.

The other signatory, Andrei Andreyevich Gromyko (1909–1989), was for decades until the rise of glasnost and perestroika the leading representative of Soviet foreign policy. He began as head of the department for America of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs; from 1943 to 1946 he was Soviet ambassador to the United States and subsequently the representative of the USSR in the Security Council of the UN (1946–1948) and deputy minister of foreign affairs of the USSR. He went to Great Britain as ambassador (1952), from 1953 was first deputy foreign minister and from 1957 to 1985 foreign minister of the USSR. He was at the same time, from 1983 to 1985, first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and from 1985 chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.⁵¹⁷

Comrade Stalin:

Twenty-six prisoners of war and interned citizens of Czechoslovakia have been found in the camps of the MVD of the USSR, nine of whom are Czechs and Slovaks, eight German, four Austrian, three Ukrainian, one Polish and one Gypsy.

The MVD of the USSR does not hold any compromising materials on these persons and considers it to be possible to repatriate them to Czechoslovakia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR conveys the opinion of the MVD of the USSR and from its side considers the repatriation of the above-mentioned twenty-six prisoners of war and interned Czechoslovak citizens to be expedient. A procedural plan is attached. We await your opinion.

According to the distribution list, the letter was circulated to Stalin, to the secretariat of the interior minister of the USSR, to the secretariat of the Foreign Ministry and to the UPVI MVD, which looked after matters concerning prisoners of war and internees.

Prior to this, on 23 November 1951, the counselor of the Soviet embassy in Prague, P.G. Krekotov, had given the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry a list of these twenty-six Czechoslovak citizens with the question as to whether the Czechoslovak government was prepared to accept them.

This case dragged on until 1952. On 3 November 1950 a “Dokladnaya zapiska Kruglova i Gromyko” (Memo of Kruglov and Gromyko) had been addressed to Stalin about the repatriation of twenty-six interned citizens of Czechoslovakia to which were attached the “Proekty postanovleniy” (Projects of Resolutions) of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks), and the Council of Ministers of the USSR.⁵¹⁸ Now, however, the Foreign Ministry in Prague asked the Ministry of National Security for its opinion. The Ministry of National Security had no objections concerning fifteen persons but did not want to give an opinion on the remaining eleven, and therefore recommended that the decision as to whether these persons would be repatriated or not should be negotiated between the Foreign Ministry and the Soviets. These negotiations took place on 11 January 1952. Another document was attached to the memorandum of Gromyko and Kruglov in the matter of the repatriation of the twenty-six Czechoslovak citizens. This was from the Council of Ministers of the USSR and was a specific decision to repatriate these persons. The Foreign Ministry (Gromyko) was tasked to persuade the Czechoslovak government to repatriate them, while the Interior Ministry (Kruglov) was tasked to release the Czechoslovak citizens from the camps (they were evidently held in different camps) and hand them over to the authorities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Repatriation. This plenipotentiary, Comrade Smorodinov, had to receive the twenty-six Czechoslovak citizens—prisoners of war and internees—from the Interior Ministry of the USSR and transfer them to the Czechoslovak authorities. These twenty-six persons were handed over to the Czechoslovaks in Chop on 15 August 1952.⁵¹⁹

Let us look at this case in more detail. The highest Soviet organs mobilized this repatriation; a proposal for the repatriation of these twenty-six Czechoslovak citizens even went through the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks). Who else among the internees had their cause dealt with at such a high level? And how many others failed? The memorandum of Gromyko and Kruglov demonstrates a dread-

ful reality. At the end of 1951, nearly seven years after the end of World War II, Czechoslovak citizens were still being held in a Soviet camp, even though it is now said that there are no compromising materials relating to them and it would be expedient (*tselesoobrazno*, which can also be translated as “appropriate”) to repatriate them. On what basis had these people been held in the Gulag for seven years? The Soviet Union always affirmed that people were sentenced to the Gulag only for proven crimes against the USSR—that was also the reason given for why many people had been deported after being informed against, often without cause, or because they had been active on behalf of the pro-Nazi Slovak state. However, in the case of these twenty-six it is clearly stated that there was no compromising material relating to them. A person could be held for seven years in the Gulag without proof, and then be told that his release would be expedient. No other documents on this case have emerged. We do not know who they were, what they were called, where they were from, whether in the end they all returned home, and whether any of them are still alive. Nor do we know how it was that Kruglov and Gromyko suddenly “remembered” them. I think it was unlikely for this repatriation to be the initiative of the Czechoslovaks. At that time the Czechoslovak authorities had long been saying that no repatriation existed because all prisoners of war and internees had been released already, according to the agreement. The attempts by families to search for their members had culminated in the years 1945–1947, and I doubt that, however much activity there might be on the part of the family, Czechoslovak diplomacy would shift its position in the period of rigid Stalinism. I am convinced that this repatriation only came about on the basis of a decision by the Soviet Union. It has already been noted that when the Soviet Union decided to repatriate someone it did so, frequently speedily and effectively, and if the Soviet authorities did not want to repatriate someone, then no power nor argument would shift them from that position.

The Case of the Inhabitants of Nižný Medzev

As late as 1949 there were still many deported civilians and prisoners of war interned in the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior continued to screen them and make decisions whether to permit or forbid repatriation. For example, on 18 and 19 July 1949 the Interior Ministry notified the Foreign Ministry that the issue of the repatriation of forty-five persons deported from Nižný Medzev had been discussed. A historical German minority lived in the Medzev region and the names of

many deportees indicated a German ethnicity—but not all of them. Only sixteen were allowed to return, four were still being investigated, and twelve were refused with a note that the negative standpoint of the Interior Ministry still held. The formulation “still held” indicates that these were cases of appeals or requests supported by insistent interventions, and that the refusals were confirmed. However, that only brings the number to forty; there are still five more repatriation cases. At the end of August 1949 the situation of some of the Medzev deportees changed for the better. According to a document of the Foreign Ministry, the number of persons permitted to be repatriated rose from sixteen to nineteen. The number of refused repatriations did not change—one cannot be surprised by the statement that the Interior Ministry’s standpoint was still valid—and the number of undecided cases increased by one. From these figures we can assume that the three permitted repatriations and one refusal make up four of the missing five, with one person from Medzev still unaccounted for. The Foreign Ministry’s document apparently closed the whole case, since it says that the results were already known to the relatives of the deportees. These results, however, meant tragedy for many. For example, several members of the Antl family were deported to the Gulag. Vojtěch Antl (b. 1911) was permitted repatriation. Michal Antl (b. 1909), however, was refused, as was Mária (b. 1925) and her brother Rudolf, a year older.⁵²⁰

Other Repatriations, Interventions, and Ethnicity Issues

Medzev’s case was far from being the only one. In the first half of 1949 the embassy in Moscow, the Ministry of the Interior and the local police stations were still in correspondence about permitting or refusing the repatriation of individuals and larger groups. Even though the war had been over for four years, some families did not give up hope and continued to send appeals for intervention in the case of their family members.⁵²¹ Those families who had received some news of their deported members were especially active. Those who had not been allowed to write home through all those years were by now considered by their families to be dead. In summaries of correspondence addressed to Stalin there is a decision which allowed Austrian internees to start writing to their relations.⁵²² This permit was issued in August 1951—meaning that for the six and a half years after the end of the war interned Austrians had been unable to let their family know that they were alive. Similar permits were given to Italians in 1951.⁵²³ In 1956 Avraham Shifrin, who gave evidence about the Soviet labor camps to the American Congress, confirmed that there were Ger-

man, Italian, French and Spanish prisoners of war in the USSR. We should also remember that from 1950 the UN requested that correspondence be facilitated, arguing on basic humanitarian principles, and we remember the Soviet reaction. But even when families had no information and had every reason to consider their missing family members to be dead, they did not lose a last hope and kept on trying through the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow for their loved ones to be found and returned. There are many cases in the archives in which the hopes of the family during their lifetime were kept, in that they had been able to win agreement with repatriation from the Commissariat of the Interior. A request for intervention had been sent to the embassy in Moscow, but face to face with the Soviet authorities, the Slovak Commissariat's affirmation had no value.⁵²⁴ This is the only way we can explain why, in 1950, the Moscow embassy sent a message to Prague that it was unable to intervene on behalf of internees and prisoners of war when they did not know where they were living in the USSR; that is, the exact number of their camp.⁵²⁵ There were also situations diametrically opposite: the Slovak National Council presented an initiative for the repatriation of persons until then interned in the USSR with the information that the exact data could not be ascertained even from the relatives.⁵²⁶ The Local National Committee expressed an opinion on their fellow citizens and allowed or disallowed their return home. It has to be said, however, that the declarations of the Local National Committee were for the most part positive, even though they did sometimes refuse without a reason being given.⁵²⁷ In two cases I came across an approval that had been changed into a refusal, but then the same Local National Committee immediately returned to the original positive decision. Interventions appear even from institutions we have not met previously. For example, on 21 September 1949 the Czechoslovak Foreign Institute sent a list of nineteen internees to the embassy in Moscow. Czechoslovakia had an interest in these persons; they had been interned in the Soviet Union a long time and in the end, as the embassy informed Prague, sixteen of these people were repatriated to Frankfurt an der Oder, which was the central repatriation camp for Germany. The Foreign Ministry later requested their repatriation to Czechoslovakia.⁵²⁸

People tried to get out of the Gulag in every possible way. For example, in 1949 and 1950 a case was dealt with in which the Soviet Union offered to hand over to Czechoslovakia several German prisoners of war, former officers of the German Army, who had themselves confessed that they had participated in murdering the villagers of Lidice and that they had fought in Slovakia against the Slovak National Uprising. These Ger-

mans were handed over to the Czechoslovak authorities in Chop; however, it immediately turned out that these crimes could not be proved, and a suspicion arose that the Germans had used this self-incrimination just to get out of the USSR, at least as far as Czechoslovakia, because they had known that the USSR had handed over similar war criminals. Czechoslovakia then asked whether the Soviet Union wanted them back, and as it did not, the Germans were eventually handed over to Germany.⁵²⁹

In March-June 1950 the Czechoslovak embassy handed over 225 submissions with requests for the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens to the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Repatriation. The majority of these submissions concerned ethnic Hungarians and Germans, and we know that at this time Germans were being fairly smoothly repatriated to Germany and Hungarians to Hungary. However, there is hardly any repatriation to Czechoslovakia and in most of the correspondence (102 memoranda) it is written that the applicants have no information about their family members and do not even know where they are held.⁵³⁰

In 1949 the ethnicity issue in most cases of deported civilians or prisoners of war concerned the sons of German families or families with mixed ethnicity, mainly Czech-German or Slovak-German. In Slovakia this applied also to Hungarian and Hungarian-Slovak families.⁵³¹

The abuse of the implications of ethnicity can be demonstrated in the following case from 1949: in 1943 Vojtech Fazekaš (b. 12 January 1922) enlisted in the Hungarian Army, fell into the hands of the Red Army, and ended doing forced labor in the Gulag. When his family requested his repatriation, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed his mother that Fazekaš would be repatriated only if he is of Czechoslovak ethnicity or if he and his family register as Slovak. On 13 January 1949 the Ministry of the Interior turned down his repatriation without giving any other reason than that it was not appropriate for Vojtech Fazekaš to be living in Czechoslovakia.⁵³²

Another case of refusal to repatriate is no less tragic. Jozef Lipták was born in 1930 and lost both his parents at the age of nine. In 1944 he ran away from a children's home in Košice, was homeless, and possibly joined the partisans. The arrival of the front found him in hospital in Poland, or possibly Hungary (depending on the source). From there he was sent to the Soviet Union and eventually found himself in the repatriation camp in Luisdorf. His repatriation to Czechoslovakia was discussed but turned down in 1949 for one reason—no one who knew him could be traced in Košice and therefore repatriation could not take place.⁵³³ The

orphaned Jozef Lipták thus ended up in the Soviet Union for the rest of his life. There were thousands of orphans and homeless children in the Soviet Union after the war and numerous accounts of their tragic fates. Maybe such a fate awaited Jozef Lipták.

There are a number of similar cases. Mrs. Čabartová was a Czech woman, the widow of a teacher of German ethnicity. Right at the end of the war her son Jiří, born in 1927, was forced to enlist in the German Army since his ethnicity, like his father's, was German. He escaped before the war ended and hid at home, but on 9 May 1945 was captured by the Red Army and sent to the USSR as a prisoner of war. I have been unable to find out whether he returned.⁵³⁴ František Stanislav Brunner was likewise the son of a mixed marriage and because his father's ethnicity was German, he had to enlist. His mother, in her applications for intervention, wrote:

[František] was twelve when his father registered as being of German ethnicity, and therefore it's not right for him to suffer and to bear the consequences of a prisoner of war belonging to the defeated German military power just because of his father's precipitate step.⁵³⁵

In the case of those youths caught in the machinery of war right at the end, their greatest battle was not bearing arms, but a struggle to survive in the Gulag. Even though the main theme of this work is about civilian deportees, it is difficult not to mention similar cases.

Prisoners of war and deported civilians were still being repatriated as late as 1950, even without the intervention of such high places as was the case of the twenty-six internees already mentioned. In 1946 and 1947 repatriation was often refused to persons of German ethnicity on the grounds that there was nowhere for the person concerned to go when repatriated, for their family had probably been deported to Germany. Cases now appeared of the repatriation of persons of German ethnicity formerly living in Czechoslovakia to Frankfurt an der Oder.⁵³⁶ Lists of persons from the Kravaře, Hlučín and Opava regions who were not repatriated to Czechoslovakia until 1951 have also survived in the archives, in spite of the fact that in 1945 it was written in the repatriation materials approved by the highest authorities in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union that persons from these regions should be treated more leniently, since the use of the German language in these regions was of long duration.⁵³⁷ Views of local national committees toward the repatriation of individuals—consent, cancellation of refusals and expressions of consent—have survived from 1950 and 1951.

At the end of November 1950 the embassy in Moscow sent to the Foreign Ministry a list of 14 persons whose repatriation was at that time being dealt with. The persons of German ethnicity had been handed over to the German authorities, those of Hungarian ethnicity to the Hungarian authorities, leaving two persons whose origin had not been ascertained. There are similar documents surviving from 1950.⁵³⁸ Sporadic documents dating from 1950, 1951 and 1952 prove that interventions for the repatriation of persons held in the Gulag were still going on. By now, however, these concern only individual cases which had a slim chance of repatriation under the harsh Stalinist regime. Some of the correspondence is about finding out where the relevant persons were interned, in the course of which the embassy in Moscow and the Ministry of the Interior in Prague tried to provide as many details as possible. Very rarely is there an intervention after a refusal has been revised; errors are sorted out in the transliteration of the names of the interned, and from time to time the documents mention a card index—maybe that same card index prepared years before by Václav Vaško, which has not survived in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry.⁵³⁹ In the archive documentation for 1951 we still come across references to camp no. 148 in the Stalino district, a place through which hundreds of Czechoslovak citizens passed, as being operational; also figuring in the documentation are the camps of Norilsk⁵⁴⁰ and Yenakievo, and even Odessa.⁵⁴¹ In these years, however, it was more often the case that (according to the Soviet authorities) the place of internment could not be ascertained, and so even though the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior agreed with the repatriation, the person concerned (most likely an abducted civilian or a prisoner of war, although he could have been an individual who had found himself in the Gulag for another reason) could not return.⁵⁴² In 1950 Olga Waltrová of Bratislava tried to have her sons repatriated, since they were “allegedly still in captivity in the USSR.” She referred to what she had heard on the radio—that one of her sons was living in Chkalov (current name in Ukrainian: Orenburg) in camp V2.⁵⁴³

In March 1950 the Czechoslovak embassy told the ministry that the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Repatriation had handed over to the Hungarian authorities thirteen persons on whom there were documents in the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry.⁵⁴⁴ Sporadic news appears from time to time in 1951, such as reports from police stations about the return of interned individuals to Czechoslovakia. For example, a man of Hungarian ethnicity abducted in 1945 as a civilian and kept in captivity for six years returned home on 7 February 1951;⁵⁴⁵ as late as 3 April 1952 the police station in Horné Saliby announces the re-

turn of two interned civilians of Hungarian ethnicity.⁵⁴⁶ We do not know whether Milan Zufalý from Frývaldov was a prisoner of war or a deported civilian, but in 1945 he was nineteen years old. In October 1951 he still had not returned from the USSR, in spite of the approval of the Interior Ministry and a number of interventions by the embassy in Moscow.⁵⁴⁷

The repatriation of approximately seventy survivors did not take place until the mid-1950s. All were accepted as citizens of Czechoslovakia, even those who at the time of their abduction had identity cards as refugees from Russia. Their repatriation was not the result of diplomatic negotiations but the amnesty announced after Stalin's death. Deportees who had been held in Soviet forced labor camps returned to Czechoslovakia on this basis. For the most part they were those who had been "put on trial" and received long sentences. Czechoslovak citizens may have been held in the USSR even after this amnesty, but I think it must have been exceptional for civilian deportees to be among them—provided of course they did not stay in the Soviet Union for good.

Exchange of Czechoslovak Passports, 1951

Czechoslovak diplomacy at the beginning of the 1950s (the harsh Stalinist years immediately after the Communist coup of February 1948) could hardly have come up with any initiative for solving the problem of repatriation which had dragged on over the years. During those years the Foreign Ministry completely lost its ability to carry out standard administrative work and, thanks to the new politically sound cadres, was submerged in deeper and deeper problems brought about by their effort to screen everything endlessly. Eventually even such exponents of the Communist regime as the Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow, Bohuslav Laštovička, vented themselves over all manner of things, because they found themselves getting into unpleasant situations which could have unfortunate results. Ambassador Laštovička had a natural advantage in being able to refer to his Soviet experience, which gave a firm footing to his criticism and provided him with some protection.

In autumn 1951 all Czechoslovak citizens had to change their passports, which meant that some persons had their Czechoslovak passports confiscated, and the new passports of Communist Czechoslovakia would only be handed out to those whom the Communist establishment saw fit. The problem was that Czechoslovak citizens abroad also had to hand their passports in to the embassy, which sent them to Prague, so that thousands of Czechoslovak citizens all over the world found themselves abroad

without documents. That applied even to embassy employees who, however, were protected by their diplomatic status and the fact that they belonged to the embassy; otherwise, it applied to a whole number of people from students to various experts, as well as men and women who had got married abroad and kept their Czechoslovak citizenship. This situation was especially dangerous for Czechoslovak citizens living in the Soviet Union. The following is a passage from a letter from an enraged Ambassador Laštovička to Foreign Minister Viliam Široký. Laštovička warns not only that Czechoslovak citizens could get into difficulties, but that the whole issue could sabotage Czechoslovak–Soviet friendship.

Dear Comrade Minister,

It is absolutely unheard of an ambassador of our Republic to be forced to turn to his minister in a matter arising out of the ministry's—or ministries' (as this also concerns education and security)—handling of our citizens living abroad, and what is more, in the USSR, who as a result of bureaucratic incompetence in extending passports are forced to live here for months without valid documents as far as the authorities here are concerned, and are therefore followed and fined for living illegally in the Soviet Union.

This scandal has dragged on the whole time I have been here... Our ministry forces us to give out ordinary scraps of paper as “travel passes” for our citizens. The Soviet authorities consider these completely worthless, invalid rags as far as they are concerned. It would be bad enough for them just to laugh at it; however, these papers damage our reputation and deprive our citizens of the right of residence and of the possibility of registering with the militia, who simply do not consider them to be valid. . . . We have to put up with the MID declaring that they are living here illegally, as according to Soviet law whoever does not have a valid document recognized and confirmed by the authorities, is simply not registered at all.

I do not understand why passports have to sit for months in the Ministry of State Security simply to have their validity prolonged. What does the StB need to investigate and ascertain about a person for which it needs their passport? Isn't their data at home enough? If something comes up in the USSR that makes their presence here no longer desirable, then we would hear about it from the Soviet authorities sooner than from Prague. And what if by some misfortune something negative did come up concerning our citizen? He would be dealt with appropriately in either case, whether he had a valid passport or not.

However, the practice in Prague condemns our citizens to live illegally in a friendly state.

Not long ago I wrote in despair directly to Comrade Borek. And what result did that have?

We received a memorandum from the ministry ... which is an example of the confusion reigning in this matter at the Foreign Ministry. Instead of proper passports they now sent us “50 temporary travel documents” as they are labeled. This in spite of the fact we have continually emphasized that the Soviet authorities do not recognize such

papers. What is worse, these papers represent political nonsense at the highest level. Strict instructions must go out immediately to ascertain who was responsible and whether their action arose out of simple illiteracy or whether it was intended to sabotage our friendly relations with the USSR—and in the month of Czechoslovak–Soviet Friendship, on top of everything. We were astounded when we read these papers and discovered that they are given out for the task of *repatriation*! That the person responsible at the Foreign Ministry does not know that repatriation no longer exists, is unheard of. Still worse is the fact that in the West they are still accusing the USSR of not having released all their prisoners of war, when the Soviet Union has more than once categorically announced that repatriation is complete! Those of our citizens who want to go home are definitely not repatriates! And we are expected to submit to the Soviet authorities “documents” which specifically refer to repatriation...

Anyone who is not carrying a passport and who is unable to produce one is not recognized as a Czechoslovak citizen, however much he insists that his passport is in Prague. The result of this is that our citizens who are not carrying a regular passport are considered in law to be stateless persons and are not allowed even to leave the country, . . . or is that intended as a method of getting rid of citizens? We can do that much more cheaply by not processing their applications at all, and for that there is no need for such complicated and treacherous bureaucracy...

When we asked, we were told by the MID of the USSR that their missions abroad have the right independently to prolong the passports of Soviet citizens. Only in cases where the validity has ended a year before its extension does the mission have to ask the ministry. They do not, however, have to send the passport to the ministry in Moscow. (Emphasis in the original)

Laštovička attached several appeals to Czechoslovak friendship with the Soviet Union to the conclusion of his letter and asked Široký to give priority to the matter which the embassy in Moscow sent to Prague—eight memoranda altogether.

In one point Laštovička was right. Taking passports from Czechoslovak citizens abroad and sending them to Prague where they lay for weeks or months was an extremely problematic measure. Czechoslovak citizens living abroad without any valid documents were at considerable risk. However, let us think this situation through further. The consular and visa provisions between states already had to count with situations where a citizen may be without his passport—it could be lost or stolen, he may be involved in an accident, or a number of other circumstances which were not his fault. The embassy in such cases has the right to provide a provisional document which would be recognized in the given country. It appears from what Ambassador Laštovička writes that even if the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow did provide a temporary passport for a Czechoslovak citizen living in the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union would not recognize such a document and would consider the person concerned

to be living in the country illegally. Let us take the next step. Czechoslovak citizens deported to the Gulag were hardly likely to have acquired a valid Czechoslovak travel document for the journey. The majority were citizens of the independent (wartime) Slovak state and were deported before Beneš's government reestablished itself in Czechoslovakia and before regular operations of Czechoslovak offices had been implemented. How could these people, not having been included in the mass repatriations, present a Czechoslovak passport?

Laštovička's musings about sabotage in the month of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship could sound like humorous exaggeration were we not aware that this was no joking matter in the 1950s, and that in those days a flippant remark could have tragic results. His remark that repatriation did not exist is significant for us, as at this time the Soviet Union was stating that repatriation had definitively been finished. And yet Laštovička must, or maybe should, have known better than anyone the true state of repatriation from the Soviet Union. He must have known that a large number of deported Czechoslovak persons and prisoners of war were still interned in the USSR and waiting for repatriation. Laštovička indicated that those without passports were not repatriates but only people wanting to go home, and in this way solved the issue of terminology. If the West was accusing the Soviet Union of still not having carried out a complete repatriation, then the best way of solving the issue was to announce that repatriation no longer existed.

Another of Laštovička's considerations is equally interesting. He broaches the possibility that behind the whole operation with passports there might be an intention to get rid of some people, but suggests immediately that it could be done more cheaply and without such "treacherous" bureaucracy. Although Laštovička claims to be in despair over the fate of people with whom he has to deal at a human level, one cannot ignore a cynical implication in his considerations. We know already that Laštovička noted down in a possibly more cynical way something that had been figuring in a more diplomatic form for several years in many documents from the Foreign Ministry. Repatriation from the Soviet Union was certainly abused as a net to catch those people whom the authorities wished to dispose of.

Laštovička's dramatic interpretation of the passport situation is supplemented by a more cultivated though no less critical document drafted by Dr. Ječný, Counselor in Moscow (and later known mainly for the popular book *Breviř moderního člověka* (Breviary of the Modern Man)). On 19 November 1951 Ječný visited the head of the Consular Administration of

the MID, Envoy Vlasov. Their discussion touched on the passport issue. In his report on the conversation with Vlasov, Ječný modifies Laštovička's words—only some Soviet offices recognize the Czechoslovak travel passes; he also uses the classic formulation that some documents were filed in error without having been processed and moreover the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had explained at least part of the muddle.⁵⁴⁸ Ječný emphasized in his report the fact that Vlasov had told him what Laštovička had written, that Soviet embassies had the power to prolong the passports of Soviet citizens living permanently abroad without sending them to Moscow, and that apparently they could even prolong passports that had expired, as long as the expiration was not older than one year. We do, however, know how people who often were not even Soviet citizens but had Russian or Ukrainian ethnicity and Czechoslovak citizenship were forced to be repatriated to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union did not like Soviet citizens to leave the country and did everything possible to stop it, and so I doubt whether in practice the Soviet embassy did behave in the above-mentioned manner. Ječný did not forget to emphasize that every foreigner who stayed in the USSR for three months without documents was in danger of being declared a stateless foreigner. There were many such persons in the Soviet Union at that time and their fate was not enviable.⁵⁴⁹

Theoretically it should not have been a problem for persons who were former Czechoslovak citizens and who now had Soviet citizenship to travel to Czechoslovakia on the basis of the so-called foreign passport. The difficulty, however, was that it was almost impossible to obtain such a foreign passport. There is, for example, the fate of the Russian wife of the Czechoslovak diplomat Václav Vaško. The Soviet authorities never allowed Irina to leave the Soviet Union and after Václav Vaško left Moscow in 1949 the married couple did not see each other again until 1968. The policies of the Soviet Union were in contradiction of all humanitarian principles. I believe that for this reason the automatic renewal of expired passports was not nearly as automatic as appears from Vlasov's conversation with Ječný or Laštovička's letter to Prague.

Repatriation Following the Death of Stalin

A number of abducted civilians and prisoners of war spent even longer in the Gulag and did not get home until the amnesty after Stalin's death. Even this process with the amnestied victims of Stalin's repression took place gradually and its final phase was not completed until Gorbachev

came to power. The amnesty after Stalin's death was announced on 27 March 1953. However, it really only concerned persons who had been sentenced for criminal acts. This was not specifically stated, but pardons were only granted to those serving sentences of five years or less, while the predominant majority of those sentenced for political crimes were imprisoned for a minimum of ten years. It was stated that longer punishments would be cut by half, but exceptions to this were political prisoners and dangerous recidivists. On 17 September 1955 the USSR announced an amnesty for Soviet citizens who had collaborated with the occupiers during the Great Patriotic War from 1941 to 1945.⁵⁵⁰

A list of persons who returned from camps in the Soviet Union in 1955, preserved in the Archive of the Czech Ministry of the Interior, consists of 281 names. The list is not more closely specified, but I have the impression that a list of 281 names could, with reservations, represent a list of people who had survived ten years in the Gulag and eventually returned to their homeland. These were mainly people who had been through "legal proceedings" and sentenced to many years for espionage. There was a relatively large number of these, including students who had been put to forced labor on fortifications at the very end of the war, civilians who had been detained on train journeys and so on. Among them are names of Russian or German origin, but also a number of Czech and Slovak names.⁵⁵¹ Deported Czechoslovak citizens of Russian and Ukrainian ethnicity returned even later, not until Nikita Khrushchev came into power and the process of "de-Stalinization" had begun.

The Repatriation of a Hungarian Prisoner of War, 2000

In 2000 the Hungarian press published a report about the discovery of a former Hungarian prisoner of war in a psychiatric clinic in Kotelnich in the Kirov region. According to the media, this man had spent two years in a camp for prisoners of war before being put in a psychiatric clinic where in 1999, fifty years later, someone noticed that this withdrawn lethargic old man was muttering to himself in Hungarian. The Russian press wrote about it, the news was taken up by the Hungarian media and in the end, with the intervention of the authorities, this approximately seventy-five-year-old man was brought to Hungary. To start with, he did not communicate with anyone, and because his real identity could not be ascertained, he was named András Tamás, because that was the name he kept repeating. The man gradually began to communicate more and to recall the surroundings where he had lived before the war; his Hungarian improved and

in the end he began to read and write in Hungarian. One need not comment on the tragedy of this case except to say that it is very possible there were many more such cases, not only Hungarians but Czechs, Slovaks and others as well.

From time to time during the 1990s, articles appeared in the media speculating whether there might still be hundreds of Czechoslovak citizens, afraid to return, in Siberia or elsewhere in the Soviet Union: "It cannot be ruled out that Czechoslovaks are still living in Siberia and, thanks to propaganda and lack of information, are afraid to return. However, this possibility has not been confirmed."⁵⁵² This article, "The Truth about the Abducted," of January 1991 was one of the first to raise the possibility, saying that "beyond the 60th latitude there are today maybe 1,200 people whom the NKVD allegedly told they would be sentenced again [in Czechoslovakia]."⁵⁵³ Similar musings have a certain rational core and appear not only in connection with abducted citizens or prisoners of war of the allied armies of Hitler's Germany. At the beginning of the 1990s a series of articles in the world press wondered whether there could still be American prisoners of war in Russia. This wave was started by the respected Russian historian Dmitri Volkogonov; he believes that some of the 39 Americans of Slovak origin captured and interned by the Soviet authorities in 1945 may still be alive on the territory of the former Soviet Union.⁵⁵⁴

In his book, *Odvlčení* (Abducted),⁵⁵⁵ Peter Juščák gathered together a significant number of stories about abducted persons. He believed Josef Schoffer from Hošťálkovice in the Opava district to have been the Czechoslovak imprisoned for the longest time. Schoffer had been captured as a soldier in the German Army and after being released from a camp in Latvia lived in a nearby village, not returning to his homeland until 1992. There were said to be more Czechs living in that village.⁵⁵⁶

4. Other Dimensions of Repatriation Diplomacy

The Volhynian Czechs

The territory of Volhynia was part of czarist Russia which, after World War I, was divided between Poland and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In the nineteenth century a number of Czech colonists had moved to Volhynia, founding communities and creating a significant and active minority, economically and culturally, which before World War II numbered around 40,000 persons.

The history of the Volhynian Czechs and their reemigration has recently been treated by several historians who draw mainly on Czech archives. Therefore I refer for the most part to work by Helena Nosková, Vladimír Dufek, Vladimír Hostička and Jaroslav Vaculík.⁵⁵⁷

Even though the actual resettlement took a relatively short time—a mere four months—it was preceded by long and difficult diplomatic negotiations which on the Soviet side involved leading figures from the Party and the government. These negotiations ran at the same time as the negotiations for the repatriation of deported Czechoslovak civilians and prisoners of war, and sometimes they overlapped. That is why the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs has at least a peripheral bearing on this study. It involved the transfer of almost 40,000 Soviet citizens. When we know how intransigent the Soviet Union was toward the departure of its citizens from its territory, we could, as did historians like Helena Nosková, consider the negotiation of the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs to be a major success for Czechoslovak postwar diplomacy. However, based on my study of Czechoslovak–Soviet repatriation diplomacy, I would like to correct this view.

Ideas about the possible return of the Volhynian Czechs went back as far as the beginning of independent Czechoslovakia, but took firmer shape when around 10,000 Volhynian Czechs joined General Svoboda's army in the Soviet Union in spring 1944 and took an active part in the struggle against Nazi Germany. The postwar concept of President Beneš, counting on the one hand on the deportation of the Germans and possibly the Hungarians, and on the other on the return of ethnic Czechs and Slovaks, also helped toward favoring the return of the Volhynian Czechs.

After the war, between 3,900 and 5,200 Volhynian Czech soldiers from Svoboda's army were demobilized and gradually settled in the areas of Czechoslovakia emptied of the German population. The original plan to allow only the soldiers' families to move from Ukraine to Czechoslovakia

gradually expanded to include almost the whole Czech minority from Volhynia. Correspondence between Zorin and Molotov from January 1949 about the families of soldiers of the former Svoboda army gives an interesting glimpse backstage on this matter. From the beginning, when the issue of their transfer first appeared on the negotiation table, there was no doubt of it being approved and the Soviet representatives were in agreement with Klement Gottwald during his Moscow visit in July 1947. The request for their transfer was in a frequently cited memorandum from Gottwald of 11 July 1947. However, the number of families to be included by this permission gradually decreased. Ambassador Horák originally negotiated with the Soviets the resettlement of 230 to 250 families. This was the number Horák had to hand, and I am convinced it was the actual number of families of the Czechoslovak soldiers who wanted to move from the Soviet Union to Czechoslovakia. To look after these numbers was not a problem; the former soldiers, already in Czechoslovakia—where they had arrived with the advance of the Red Army—put in requests for their families to join them. However, after the February 1948 Communist takeover Ambassador Horák was recalled and the new Communist ambassador Bohuslav Laštovička cut the number of approved requests to between fifty and sixty. Still more drastic cuts in the list were made by the Soviet ambassador, Zorin, who left only twenty-two families, less than one-tenth of the original number. Molotov's reaction was "*nado soglasit'sya*" (we have to come to an agreement).⁵⁵⁸

Helena Nosková, in her work *Návrat Čechů z Volyně* (The Return of the Czechs from Volhynia), explains the situation around the settling of the Volhynian Czechs, including soldiers from Transcarpathian Ukraine, who had already been in Czechoslovakia from the end of the war. She also deals with the approach of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and other political parties toward the reemigration project. She gives a good description of the undetermined attitude of the Communist Party to this issue and of the heavy pressure the organizations and associations of the Volhynian Czechs put on the government.

The reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs began on 25 June 1945, when Zorin, Soviet ambassador in Prague, was given a note in which the Czechoslovak government asked the opinion of the Soviet government concerning the possible resettlement in Czechoslovakia of persons of Czech or Slovak ethnicity living in the Volhynian *guberniya* and the possibility of their renouncing their Soviet citizenship.⁵⁵⁹ Negotiations on the treaty which had been closed on 29 June 1945 (in which the option of the inhabitants of Transcarpathian Ukraine and resettlement in Czechoslova-

kia was anchored) created space for the Czechoslovak delegation to table the issue of the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs. On 23 July 1945 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow placed before the Soviets a memorandum about the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs⁵⁶⁰ and at the same time the Czechoslovak government announced that it was not against resettlement in exchange for Russians and Ukrainians. At the beginning of August the embassy pressed for the standpoint of the Soviet authorities on the possibility of completing the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs that autumn, so that in spring they could begin the work in the fields. On 27 September 1945 the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs was informed by the Soviets that mass reemigration could be realized only on the basis of a special treaty. According to Helena Nosková, the Soviet Union did not at that time anticipate any great interest in reemigration; they expected only individual requests, and these they wanted to assess themselves.⁵⁶¹

Objections were also expected from the Ukrainian authorities who could rightly point to a shortage of labor in Ukraine. However, the Czechoslovak government could at the same time also use the argument of their own labor shortage to bring about the reemigration of Czech minorities from a number of European countries—Yugoslavia, Romania, Austria, Poland, even Belgium, France and Germany. The deportation of the Germans had left Czechoslovakia with a gap in its labor force; on the other hand, the loss to Czechoslovakia of its labor force had not been as severe as in other European states. I have the impression that the policy on the part of the Czechoslovak government of the reemigration of Czech and Slovak minorities was motivated as much if not more by nationalist interests as by the need to supplement its labor force. The reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs in the context of the deportation of the Germans gave it an added urgency and increased its weight.

On 28 November 1945 the head of the 4th European Department of the MID, A. Pavlov, expressed the attitude of the supreme authorities of Ukraine to the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs, in the course of which the names given on the distribution list belonged to the most eminent of the Stalinist period: Molotov, Beria, Malenkov, Mikoyan, Vyshinsky and Dekanozov.⁵⁶² Regular reports about the progress of repatriation of Volhynian Czechs to Czechoslovakia were given to Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Zhdanov. On the basis of Pavlov's submission Molotov subsequently asked Beria, Malenkov and Mikoyan to assess the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs. The Soviet authorities' attitude toward the Czech population of the Volhynia was the following: "the 'prosperous-kulak

elite' (*zazhitочно-kulakskaja verkhushka*) of the Czech villages wants to move, while the 'poor and middle-class' (*bednyatsko-serednyatskie*) want to remain. The wives and families of the Czechoslovak troops want to move."⁵⁶³

In making this judgment the idea took shape that the Czechs and Slovaks from Volhynia would be allowed to move to Czechoslovakia if the same number of Belarusians and Ukrainians living in Czechoslovakia returned to the USSR. Soviet policy began to show a clear tendency to recover all the citizens who had left Soviet territory to live elsewhere. For example, there were about 30,000 (some Soviet sources give 170,000) inhabitants of the Baltic states who were with the help of the Swedish authorities evacuated to Sweden in September and October 1944, and whose return "to the last man" was requested by the Soviet government. The Soviet ambassador in Sweden, Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai, was heavily involved in these negotiations.⁵⁶⁴

On 4 December 1945 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow telegraphed that according to Molotov the matter would be decided in a few days and that the decision would most probably be positive.⁵⁶⁵ The reply came on 11 December 1945 in a note in which the Czechoslovak side was told that the Soviet government was responding to the request of the Czechoslovak government to allow the option, and assumes that the Czechoslovak government will act reciprocally. The Soviet Union had thus decided to permit the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs on the condition of a reciprocal option and the transfer of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians from Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union.

How did the Czechoslovaks proceed with the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs? There was a meeting at the Foreign Ministry of representatives of the relevant ministries immediately on 2 January 1946. They discussed how the issue of real estate was to be resolved, for in the USSR land was state property. On 14 January there was a consultation of the interministerial committee for repatriation issues where representatives of the ministries and other leading offices of the state administration with a say in the matter met representatives of the Volhynian Czechs. Some consultations still took place at an interministerial level later in the month and on 24 January a proposal of agreements was presented through the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. At that time Czechoslovakia tried to propose to the Soviet Union the transfer of all citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity. The USSR, however, turned this down and therefore Ambassador Horák recommended negotiation be limited to the reemigration of the Czechs from Volhynia.⁵⁶⁶

However, the next six months saw no major advance in the negotiations about the Volhynian Czechs. The tension of the Volhynian Czechs already in Czechoslovakia increased in spring 1946, for there were many fears about whether their families would be allowed to move from the Soviet Union. Not only was time running out, but the situation became more acute with the activities of the Soviet repatriation officers around the preparation and signing of an agreement between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia about the exchange of populations, in which the options and reemigration of the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians to the USSR were anchored. Cases were reported of the Volhynian Czechs in Czechoslovakia being terrorized by representatives of the NKVD and threatened with being returned to the USSR in spite of the fact that they had opted for Czechoslovakia. Helena Nosková shows how, when it became clear that numerical parity would not be achieved, the Soviet Union used different methods to complicate the reemigration and make it impossible for some of those who had chosen the option. The Czechoslovak Communists—who tried to impede repatriation by pointing out that unreliable and unscreened elements were being settled in the border regions and that there were alleged inadequacies in the work of the Foreign Ministry and other offices—went hand in hand with the Soviet Union. The reemigration was to some extent held up, but the Communists failed to prevent it because “the Czechoslovak government regarded it as a political issue, measuring its strength against the Communist opposition, and it was decided to carry it out.”⁵⁶⁷

Complaints against the Soviet repatriation officers mounted, in the course of which the Czechoslovaks were highly critical with regard to the Soviet repatriation authorities:

The activity of the Soviet repatriation organs in the Czechoslovak Republic is mainly confrontational in its antithetical approach to the Czechoslovak reemigration conclusions and diverges diametrically from the promises of the official Soviet representatives. We have to state that the method of procedure of the Soviet organs does not allow people to make a voluntary decision to return; and our organs, especially the SNB [police], support this approach although it is not in line either with the spirit of the bilateral reemigration treaties between the USSR and the Czechoslovak Republic, nor with the democratic principles of both states. We ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there for rapid intervention, because members of the First Czechoslovak Army Corps from the USSR are affected by this as well as civilians who live in fear and disquiet. As well as this there is the question of whether the Czechoslovak Republic is able to realize the promises given to the reemigrants.⁵⁶⁸

Meanwhile, however, the Czechoslovak and the Soviet sides worked on the preparation of intergovernmental treaties. The Soviet side implemented its proposal as the basis of negotiation. That was accepted as the basis of the treaty on 30 May 1946 and the MID was officially entrusted by Stalin with the negotiation and signing of this treaty, which happened relatively quickly.

The Treaty on Options and Resettlement was signed on 10 July 1946. It became the legal basis of the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁶⁹ However, on the basis of exchange, this treaty required the resettlement in the Soviet Union of persons of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnicity living in Czechoslovakia. It was signed by Ambassador Jiří Horák for the government of Czechoslovakia and S.A. Lozovsky for the government of the USSR.

According to a resolution of the Czechoslovak government, the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Care was responsible for carrying out the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs. The main volume of the work was borne by the Reemigration Office of the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Care, which at that time sat in Spálená Street in Prague.⁵⁷⁰ However, many ministries were involved in the reemigration project, primarily the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense and other institutions, including the Czechoslovak Foreign Institute.

In July 1946 the Ministry for the Protection of Labor and Social Care put together a Czechoslovak mission to go to Volhynia. Each participating ministry was to send a representative with the mission. On 3 August the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested Soviet entry visas for the members of this repatriation mission responsible for organizing the resettlement on the spot.

In August 1946 the Joint Commission was definitively set up in Moscow.⁵⁷¹ On the Czech side its members were: the chief Czechoslovak plenipotentiary, Counselor Dr. Václav Šatava; his deputy, Counselor Dr. Václav Mudra of the Ministry of the Interior; Division General Jindřich Bejl; Dr. Štefan Škoda for the Ministry of the Interior; and Counselor Jiří Kašpárek of the embassy.

The members of the Commission named on the Soviet side were, according to the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR Resolution no. 1792–777 of 14 August 1946: Counselor E.S. Garmash of the Foreign Ministry of the USSR as its chairman; Deputy M.V. Podgorny of the Ukrainian government, who was at the same time the Soviet repatriation plenipotentiary in Poland; and Colonel D.D. Prokofiev as the representative of the Minis-

try of the Interior. On Czechoslovak territory Alexei Afanasievich Mogila was the main Soviet plenipotentiary for options and resettlement of citizens of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnicity to the USSR.

In subsequent months a number of questions connected with carrying out the resettlement were resolved. The matter reached the Constituent Assembly in Czechoslovakia; the Joint Commission considered a number of questions, for example, that some Soviet requirements were too limited for the successful carrying out of resettlement. Instructions for Volhynian Czechs and for Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian repatriates to the Soviet Union were worked out, and reemigration areas and reemigration centers were demarcated. In Prague, a number of consultations on specific support of resettlement took place; the Ministry of National Defense was to have an important task during its realization.

The Czechoslovak and the Soviet commissars for resettlement from the USSR to Czechoslovakia were far from being in agreement; in a number of matters they had very different opinions. In autumn 1946 questions concerning the transfer of cash payments to the reemigrants had still not been resolved and meanwhile in Moscow the Joint Commission was still negotiating questions linked with the reemigration. The number of those from Transcarpathian Ukraine who would choose Czechoslovakia and the number of those Volhynian Czechs who would reemigrate was estimated. It was clear that the number of those who wanted to settle in Czechoslovakia was overwhelming compared with those going in the opposite direction. A number of difficulties appeared whose resolution was clearly bound up with the Soviet policy of support for the Czechoslovak Communists. When, for example, on 1 February 1947 the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry approached the MID through Ambassador Zorin to request entry visas to the USSR for two Czechoslovak experts—Jiří Koťátko, head of department at the Ministry of Agriculture, and Miroslav Krejza, representative of the administration for the resettlement of Czechoslovak citizens—to visit the Volhynian Czechs for the purpose of coordination, the Soviet government argued that visits by experts were not included in the contract of 10 July 1946. However, because both experts were members of the Communist Party, they would in their case make an exception and visas would be granted.⁵⁷²

At the same time as a reply was sent to Gottwald's memorandum of 11 July 1947, a summary of the differences between the standpoints of the Czechoslovak and the Soviet delegation in the Joint Commission was worked out at the MID.

Helena Nosková considers the period from July to November 1946 to have been a time when the efficiency of the Czechoslovak institutions

clashed with the bureaucracy of the Soviet authorities, with the complicated approaches, incompetence, alibi-ism and unwillingness to take responsibility for any sort of decision that was not authorized by a superior.⁵⁷³

By 20 December 1946 the Joint Commission had met seventeen times. The Soviet side had sent to Czechoslovakia sixty-two employees of the chief plenipotentiary of the USSR for options and resettlement and set up its office in Czechoslovakia for the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian citizens who were supposed to move back to the USSR. The center was in Prague with branches in Bratislava, Prešov, Bardejov, Humenné, Medzilaborce, Brno and Pilsen. Offices for reemigration were set up in Volhynia in Luck (the headquarters), and in Rovno (current name: Rivne), Dubno, Shepetovka (current name: Shepetivka), Zhitomir (current name: Zhytomyr), Zdolbunov (current name: Zdolbuniv), Senkevichevka (current name: Senkevichivka) and Verby.

On 31 December 1946 a report on the progress of the work of the Soviet–Czechoslovak Joint Commission for Options and Resettlement was submitted to Vyshinsky.⁵⁷⁴ It recapitulated the closing of the treaty between the governments of the USSR and Czechoslovakia on the right of options and resettlement of citizens of Czech and Slovak ethnicity living in the territory of the Volhynian *guberniya* and Czechoslovak citizens of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnicity living in Czechoslovak territory.

The report says that Chief Plenipotentiary of the Government of the USSR Mogila came to Prague with his office on 17 December 1946. Immediately afterwards Mogila and the Soviet ambassador Zorin announced that “the Czechoslovak side has breached the principle of mutuality and does not hold to the agreement of the deadline for applications on 1 January 1947.” The Soviets criticized the fact that the work of the Soviet office was running only in Prague, Brno and Pilsen and in the end agreed with the requests of the Czechoslovak side for the extension of the term for options by two weeks, to 15 February 1947, even though according to the Soviet side the original term for the coming of the delegation to 1 January 1947 was sufficient.

Originally a much shorter deadline was established—to start with, the applicants should have decided by 15 September 1946. Then there followed a battle about days and weeks. On 29 August the Czechoslovak side requested an extension of the deadline to submit applications to 15 November 1946, then to 1 January 1947, then the deadline was extended to 15 February and eventually to 15 March. This emerges from a memo-

randum of 12 December 1946 from Garmash and Alexandrov to Dekanov, in which they wrote that it will be necessary to agree both with this extension and with the settling being finished by 15 March 1947 instead of 15 November 1946, as originally thought.⁵⁷⁵ In the end the deadline for application to opt ended on 15 March 1947 and the deadline for the actual resettlement was established as 10 May 1947. The MID announced the decision of the government of the USSR to prolong the deadline for resettlement to 10 May in a note of 1 February 1947.

This shift in the date was connected with the Soviet interest in the re-emigration of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians from Czechoslovakia to the USSR.⁵⁷⁶ For example, a letter of 21 January 1947 from Molotov to Stalin about the Czechoslovak request to extend the deadline for resettlement spoke explicitly of the Soviet interest. Molotov told Stalin about the most recent development of the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs. He referred to the requests from the Czechoslovaks about postponing the deadlines for options and resettlement, since the short deadline established on the Soviet side could not be met. The Volhynian Czechs interested in resettlement had farmsteads and property and it was not simple in the cumbersome Soviet conditions to liquidate the existence of many generations in Ukraine and prepare everything to start a new life in Czechoslovakia. Molotov recommended that the Czechoslovak request for extending the deadline be granted because “we likewise have an interest in the resettlement of persons of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnicity from Czechoslovakia.”⁵⁷⁷ Similarly, the reaction of the Soviet authorities to the Czechoslovak request was: “it is essential to grant this request for extension.”⁵⁷⁸

Helena Nosková describes the difficulties of the preparations in Volhynia for resettlement. It meant the registration of more than 10,000 families—over 30,000 inhabitants—spread out over an extensive area up to now devastated by war, and moreover in the months of the heaviest frosts.

The Soviets insisted that the process of the resettlement of citizens in whom it was interested should be speeded up as much as possible and that the original deadline for applications was quite feasible. This interest was real; it figured in the correspondence of the highest representatives of the Soviet Communist Party and state and I am convinced that without this interest the Soviet side would never have agreed to the departure of the Volhynian Czechs.

In the end the Soviet Union agreed to shift the deadline for applications to 15 March 1947 and to extend the deadline for resettlement to 10 May,⁵⁷⁹ when the whole action really did come to an end. At the same

time the Czechoslovak side requested an extension of the deadline for the options of the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian citizens in Czechoslovakia. On 31 January 1947 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow received a memorandum from the MID, recapitulating that the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs had on 20 December 1946 requested that the deadline for the options of Soviet citizens in Czechoslovakia be prolonged to 15 February. Immediately after that, on 4 January 1947, Clementis had apparently requested a prolongation to 1 March, and on 6 January 1947 Counselor Kašpárek in Moscow had turned with the same request to the 4th European Department of the MID. The Soviet memorandum announced that the government of the USSR agreed with the prolongation of the deadline according to the wishes of the Czechoslovak government. Because more than three weeks had passed from the time when Clementis presented this request, the deadline was extended to 15 March 1947, and the deadline of the resettlement from Czechoslovakia to the USSR to 10 May.⁵⁸⁰

According to the Soviets, up until 25 December 1946, 21,846 persons had applied for resettlement in Czechoslovakia, and the first transports were planned for mid-1947.⁵⁸¹ The Soviets put heavy emphasis on the principle of reciprocity, but it soon became plain that the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians living in Czechoslovakia were far from being as willing to move back to the Soviet Union as the Soviet government had imagined. Only 107 persons living in Czechoslovakia applied for resettlement in the Soviet Union, which was a huge difference in comparison with the interest of thousands of people in returning to Czechoslovakia. When in October 1947 Zorin sent Molotov the modest list of these 107 persons—emigrants who, according to a decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of 5 October 1946, were citizens of the Soviet Union and who now requested resettlement in the USSR—the MID declared there were some on the list in whom the Soviet Union was not interested.⁵⁸²

The Soviet side now saw that there was no way in which they would achieve reciprocity on the basis of voluntary application, and therefore used every opportunity to force the return of a large number of people living in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak authorities, above all the Ministry of the Interior, were obliged to be as helpful as they could and actively try to increase the number of those willing to leave Czechoslovakia. The Ministry of the Interior, under the strong influence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia even before February 1948, cooperated with the Soviet authorities in forcibly deporting persons of Russian and Ukrainian ethnicity who had found a refuge and home in Czechoslova-

kia.⁵⁸³ A memorandum from F.T. Gusev to Ambassador Zorin in Prague on 6 April 1947 gives us an insight into all kinds of things. Gusev wrote that according to information from the plenipotentiary of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, it had been ascertained that there were in Czechoslovakia 2,624 Soviet citizens for repatriation, 1,352 of whom were married to Czechoslovaks, and 1,164 of whom were sought by the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior as persons avoiding repatriation. It emerges that those who were neither married to a Czechoslovak citizen nor in hiding numbered only 108, which more or less concurs with the figure given above. Gusev continues: "It is clear from the materials of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Repatriation that the local authorities in Czechoslovakia are not devoting sufficient attention to detection, rounding up and repatriation."⁵⁸⁴

Enclosed with Gusev's memorandum is a copy of a letter from the Czechoslovak minister of the interior, Václav Nosek, dated 13 November 1947, in which Nosek reacts to a letter of 18 October from an unnamed member of parliament. Nosek writes that he gave an instruction that all possible assistance be provided to the Soviet repatriation authorities. All Soviet citizens without a valid Soviet passport had to be rounded up by the police and concentrated in a collection camp on the Letná Plain in Prague, with the exception of women married to Czechoslovak citizens before 24 June 1947, those who had approval from the USSR, and those who had renounced their Soviet citizenship after 1917.

In an information summary drafted by Garmash for Alexandrov, head of the 4th European Department of the MID, he writes that the resettlement of persons of Czech and Slovak ethnicity from the USSR to Czechoslovakia was initiated on 30 January 1947. However, the first repatriation train from Volhynia set out before the negotiations and approval of the whole action had been completed. The train was stopped in Chop and forbidden to enter Czechoslovakia. It remained in Chop for two weeks, during which the repatriates were supplied with neither food nor medical assistance, until many people were in desperate straits. This unfortunate event had a distressing influence on those interested in resettlement.

According to Garmash's summaries from 30 January until 20 March 1947, forty-eight trains making up 2,107 cars set out from Dubno, Rovno, Luck, Zhitomir, Zdolbunov and other places. Altogether 17,393 persons were conveyed in 1,329 cars while the remainder were filled with cattle. Thirty-eight troop trains had apparently already crossed the Czechoslovak frontier and the other ten were on the way to Mukachevo (current name: Mukacheve) in Ukraine. Garmash also announced that the transfer of

those to be resettled from Czechoslovakia began on 29 January 1947. From that time until 20 March thirty trains (1,490 cars) set out for the USSR, carrying 5,816 persons in 930 cars while the remainder carried cattle.⁵⁸⁵ On 10 May 1947 Cokol (first name unknown), the chief representative of the government of the USSR for option and resettlement of persons of Czech and Slovak ethnicity from the USSR to Czechoslovakia, announced to Vyshinsky that the action was complete. The following information was given:

1. Total number of requests submitted for option and resettlement: 10,435 families (34,087 persons)
2. Approved for resettlement: 10,411 (33,979 persons)
3. Not approved: 24 (108 persons) who according to Cokol "did not have the right"
4. Resettled: a total of 10,170 families (33,031 persons). Not resettled: 241 families (146 families abandoned resettlement, 143 people died in the meantime, 95 families [308 persons] never arrived)

The proposal of the closing protocol of the Joint Czechoslovak–Soviet Commission gives us more information on the property aspect of the resettlement. According to this, the resettlers were to

leave behind property worth 52,623,207 rubles. The resettlers handed over to the Soviet financial authorities 33,671,955 rubles and 22,463 obligations and deposit documents. In comparison with this the resettlers from Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union left property worth 267,156,837 crowns, and surrendered to the financial authorities 3,815,440 crowns and financial documents valued at 22,490 crowns.⁵⁸⁶

The financial impact of resettling was considerable for the Volhynian Czechs, since they lost a goodly sum. The Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow turned to the MID with questions about how to deal with the property aspect of resettlement. One of the most serious questions was how to resolve the fact that those who were moving from the Soviet Union had to surrender all their money, deposit books and shares in return for which they received Soviet receipts. All they were allowed to take was 1,000 rubles per person while the rest of their money had to be left in the bank. What most disturbed the Volhynian Czechs was the fact that these sums might be annulled if they were not withdrawn on Soviet territory within six months. This condition ensured in advance that this considerable amount of money would fall to the Soviet state. To manage this situation the Czechoslovak delegation in the Joint Commission tried to get permission to exchange rubles for foreign currency and addressed a number of questions to Gosbank (the state bank) via the Czechoslovak embassy in

Moscow. However, the Soviet side was implacable on this issue and always argued that no special treaty had been closed for the financial adjustment proposed by the Czechoslovak side. This argument appears, for example, in a memorandum from A.M. Alexandrov to the deputy minister of foreign trade of the USSR, Ivan Fedorovich Semichastnov, on 9 August 1947, conveying the Czechoslovak embassy's request for a solution to the problem. There was also an intense exchange of views on the financial issues of the resettlement among Zorin, Vyshinsky and Molotov.⁵⁸⁷

As far as property which had to be transported to the USSR was concerned, the Soviet side was able to pull out all the stops for a smooth transition. That is shown by the apparently peripheral but—for Czechoslovakia at that moment—unpleasant problem when horses and pigs were stuck in a train on the frontier while in transit from Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union, a problem which occupied several highly placed diplomats. The Soviet side immediately went into overdrive; Ambassador Zorin complained about the horses and pigs to the State Secretary Clementis, and the same day Clementis sent Zorin a note of apology. All of this was referred to Moscow by Chief Plenipotentiary of the Government of the USSR for Options and Resettlement Mogila.⁵⁸⁸

The Czechoslovak "Final Report on the Carrying Out of Mass Reemigration of Czechs and Slovaks from Abroad" with commentary was not finished until 1950, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Protection of Work and Social Care and the Foreign Ministry.⁵⁸⁹

Even though the resettlement was in itself successful and ended on the approved date, for a long time the situation was not completely closed. Issues of property and finance connected with the resettlement dragged on. The repatriation of the wives and children of soldiers in Svoboda's army who were understandably interested in having their families follow them to Czechoslovakia was for a long time unresolved, and for five or six years they tried through the Foreign Ministry to bring their families to Czechoslovakia. There were around 650 of these cases.⁵⁹⁰

On 31 December 1948 Ambassador Laštovička received a telegram from Clementis, from which it emerges that the ministry had carried out a detailed revision of various repatriation requests. Clementis writes that "we do not have it in mind to request the repatriation of those members of our foreign army who are still to be found on the territory of the USSR. We are limiting ourselves to the repatriation of family members of those who found themselves in this country and who are our citizens."

Clementis was clearly negotiating with Molotov in the presence of Laštovička, but from various notes in Clementis's telegram we can as-

sume that Laštovička may not have understood some things as exactly as they were discussed with Molotov, for which Clementis rebukes him.⁵⁹¹

On 11 January 1949 Ambassador Laštovička asked the ministry for a list of wives and underage children of Czechoslovak foreign soldiers who were in Czechoslovakia and whose wives and children had still not joined them from the USSR.⁵⁹²

As late as the early 1950s, individual applications were still coming in for supplementary reemigration. There was the case of three brothers who came to Czechoslovakia with Svoboda's army and from 1951 to 1952 were still trying to bring their mother from the Soviet Union. Cases of Czech orphans appeared, as, for example, an orphan found in 1951 in the orphanage in Birobidzhan in the Khabarovsk region.⁵⁹³

According to Helena Nosková, the Foreign Ministry and the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow showed good diplomatic skills during negotiations about the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs and about the Agreement on Options and Resettlement. The elections in Czechoslovakia and the increasing strength of the Communists were not an influence. Nevertheless, the Communists did not look favorably on the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs, for it complicated their domestic policy of the redistribution of property after the deportation of the German-speaking population.

However, I believe that at this time the Soviet Union did not want to hold up progress and a study of the Soviet sources concerning the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs proves that when something was in the interests of the Soviet Union, it was able to act very quickly. An example of this is their signature to the agreement about options and resettlement. At that time Vyshinsky was not in Moscow, and instructed Lozovsky that the agreement should be signed as quickly as possible on his behalf. He writes that even though a governmental decision had entrusted him alone with the signature, Lozovsky had to do it for him and not wait for his return. Apparently Comrade Molotov agreed.⁵⁹⁴

I have the impression that the relocation of the Volhynian Czechs, the largest movement of reemigrants in the history of the resettlement of Czechs and Slovaks from 1945 to 1949, owes its success to the fortunate convergence of several factors. Helena Nosková sums up:

In the last months of the postwar democracy in Czechoslovakia the government and its institutions, supported by the three parties of the National Front, showed itself able to implement and realize the return of Volhynian Czechs to their homeland and in this way to prove that at this time there was during the resolving of fundamental questions

a democratic approach concerning the return of these fellow countrymen guaranteed by the plurality of the democratic parties which asserted themselves despite the resistance of several members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and part of the Party apparatus.⁵⁹⁵

We can agree with Nosková to some extent. When it comes to the decision of the Soviet Union, I am cautious about crediting either the democratic principles of Czechoslovakia in those years or the activities of the Volhynian Czechs in pushing through their resettlement. I am also careful in the course of claiming that the good and responsible work on the Czechoslovak side contributed to a successful conclusion.

I think that the main motive which led the Soviet Union to agree with option and resettlement was the Soviet interest in achieving reciprocity, that is, in gaining the same number of inhabitants of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian origin from Czechoslovakia. In my view the Soviet Union considerably underestimated the interest the Volhynian Czechs had in resettling in Czechoslovakia, and on the other hand was clearly taken aback by the small interest among those who could opt for the Soviet Union. In the end 4,857 persons (according to some sources 8,432) decided to return to the Soviet Union, which in comparison with the 33,077 who opted for Czechoslovakia was almost seven times (or four times) fewer. It would have been difficult for the arguments of the demobilized Volhynian Czechs in Czechoslovakia to penetrate the hearing of Soviet officials if not even the voices of the diplomats warning against the serious political and social problems of deportation in Slovakia had any weight on the Soviet side. The Communists did at that time implement screenings and a selective approach in the case of the repatriation of the deported civilians. We know that there were among the deported civilians people who had played a positive role in the liberation of Czechoslovakia and therefore even the argument that the Volhynian Czechs fought against the Nazis cannot be overestimated. I would like to mention in conclusion that if Transcarpathian Ukraine had not been annexed to the Soviet Union, the resettlement of the Volhynian Czechs would have been impossible to realize.

Other Repatriation Agenda

The remaining items on the repatriation agenda were for the most part negotiations about the repatriation of individuals, frequently with the aim of bringing families together. In these cases the Soviet authorities put on pressure that resettlement should be to the USSR. There were relatively frequent cases of orphans: orphans from mixed marriages, lost children,

the illegitimate children of young women and soldiers of the Red Army. There were a substantial number of cases in this group and the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry repeatedly explained that it could not intervene for people who had Soviet citizenship.⁵⁹⁶ The tragic destinies of this time can be shown in the case of a Volhynian Czech orphan from Chesky Malin (current name: Malyn) in Ukraine. The parents had died when the Nazis massacred the inhabitants of the settlement and the child's only relations lived in Czechoslovakia. The child, however, was a Soviet citizen, and so negotiations about the relatives taking care of the child met with a negative attitude. There is nothing in the archives to indicate how the case had ended.

Czechoslovakia tried to initiate the resettlement of other groups of people of Czech and Slovak origin living in the Soviet Union who were interested in obtaining the right to return. This project proved to be impractical and resettlement remained limited to the Volhynian Czechs; later attempts were equally unsuccessful. Let us take one example: on 2 November 1948 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow turned to the MID with a request to hand over a note to the North-East Administrative Committee in Kharbin. This note referred to the fact that for a number of years there had been many Czechs and Slovaks living in Manchuria who now wanted to return to Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government was thinking about sending a special representative to Manchuria, to evaluate the situation on the spot and to request permission for them.⁵⁹⁷

Václav Vaško mentions briefly in his memoirs that "then I almost went to Manchuria to repatriate Czechs and Slovaks—former legionnaires who had settled there after the civil war in Russia, together with representatives of various firms who had been prevented by the war from returning home, but nothing came out of it. Our own Ministry of the Interior said that we did not need further reactionaries in our Republic."⁵⁹⁸

Although I was unsuccessful in researching the history of Czech and Slovak citizens in Manchuria and the attempts to repatriate them, I believe that the time when the Volhynian Czechs could be successfully repatriated was by now irrevocably over and that it was the attitude on the Czechoslovak side to which Vaško refers in his memoirs which blocked any further repatriation.

Some cases from the repatriation files: a Russian woman married to a Czech and living in Czechoslovakia took her children to visit her parents in the USSR, where, even though she had been equipped with the necessary permits and documents, she and the children disappeared; the underage son of a Czechoslovak woman, who repeatedly fled to the USSR; a

Czechoslovak woman with an illegitimate child by a Soviet soldier whom she followed with the child—no traces of her could be found; and relatively frequent cases when orphans from mixed marriages were in the USSR and the embassy tried to get them to Czechoslovakia.⁵⁹⁹

In 1945 especially, but also in 1946, cases occurred where people crossed the frontier without being aware of it, some of them not even knowing that Transcarpathian Ukraine was now part of the USSR, and sometimes not attending sufficiently to this change. There were cases of woodcutters, strolling tinkers, homeless persons, vagrant children, gypsies. Many people, however, crossed the border with the aim of getting out of the Soviet Union and tried to stay in Czechoslovakia. General Golubev repeatedly notified K.Y. Voroshilov and others that Soviet citizens were illegally crossing the Czechoslovak–Soviet borders into Czechoslovakia.⁶⁰⁰

Individual requests from Soviet citizens, frequently of Czech origin, for reemigration to Czechoslovakia created a large part of the agenda of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. However, permission to return was exceptionally difficult to obtain because the Soviet Union did not look favorably on these requests and did not want to grant them.⁶⁰¹ A request for reemigration had to be accompanied by a great number of documents and permits such as, for example, a declaration by a family member with Czechoslovak citizenship saying that they requested the reemigration of the relative concerned, and declarations by the whole hierarchy of local administration in Czechoslovakia (agreement with reemigration from the local national committee, regional national committee and district national committee) and from the Ministry of the Interior, all translated into Russian by a court-appointed expert. A declaration by the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow also had to be included. The request could run into difficulties at all these levels, and even if all these declarations were collected, permission to emigrate from the USSR was still not certain, because the majority of these requests were refused by the Soviet authorities.⁶⁰²

Similar cases still made up part of the repatriation diplomacy in subsequent years; in 1949 and above all in 1950, 1951 and 1952 they replaced or ousted the agenda of repatriation of deported civilians and prisoners of war.

The Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow should have had an important role in the relaxation of the reemigration of citizens born in the USSR to Czechoslovakia. The interministerial meeting⁶⁰³ of 19 November 1947 had decided that in future it would leave decisions about requests of re-emigrants exclusively to the Czechoslovak embassy “since it is the only

body which can, by investigating on the spot, judge the behavior of the reemigrants during their stay in the USSR.”⁶⁰⁴

This standpoint was, however, affected by the Communist takeover of February 1948. On 21 November 1948, Dr. Antonín Bartoň and Dr. Jiří Zedtwitz asked Bohuslav Laštovička for his opinion on recommending reemigration. It seems that Ambassador Zorin had looked on it positively while he was in Prague but shortly after his return to Moscow changed his mind.⁶⁰⁵

The Categories of Persons Applying for Resettlement in Czechoslovakia

On 28 February 1949 one of the diplomats of the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow visited the 4th European Department of the MID and handed over to A.M. Alexandrov five lists of persons requesting resettlement from the Soviet Union to Czechoslovakia:

1. Underage children on their own in the USSR whose parents live in the Czechoslovak Republic
2. Women and underage children of former Czechoslovak soldiers abroad who live in the USSR (except for the Transcarpathian region) without their husbands, who are in the Czechoslovak Republic
3. Women and underage children of former Czechoslovak soldiers abroad who live in the Transcarpathian region without their husbands, who are in the Czechoslovak Republic
4. Women and underage children of Czechoslovak citizens who live in the Transcarpathian region
5. Women and underage children of Czechoslovak citizens who live in the USSR (except for the Transcarpathian region)

Alexandrov reacted to these lists with amazement. He was surprised by the number of people whose repatriation the embassy was requesting and expressed serious doubts over their chance of approval, in particular, in the case of the women and underage children of Czechoslovak citizens living outside the Transcarpathian region. He promised, however, that he would pass the lists on for further consideration.

Apart from the applicants from these five groups the embassy had at that time a considerable number of other requests for resettlement on its files. They can be summarized into these categories:

1. Parents of Czechoslovak citizens
2. Former Czechoslovak soldiers abroad with their wives and children
3. Former Czechoslovak citizens who had taken Soviet citizenship and whose relations lived in Czechoslovakia

Alexandrov was informed about these applicants, not yet as repatriation requests, but because the MID should know that such applications existed, and should think about what attitude to take toward them. Alexandrov, however, said that these persons could travel to Czechoslovakia only on the basis of foreign passports which would be issued individually, on a case-by-case basis. The possibility of these people leaving the Soviet Union, i.e., resettling, could not even be contemplated. They could only visit Czechoslovakia on the basis of an entry visa, and to get this they would have to submit what was called a "foreign passport" to the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. The embassy even warned Prague against intervention for the persons given in the three lowest categories. Apparently such interventions could have an opposite effect when applying for a "foreign passport." Apart from this, the embassy writes that the first five lists are considered by the Soviet authorities to be definitive and no more names can be added to them, because this is not acceptable to the Soviet authorities. The fate of all these applications is further emphasized by a note from the embassy that if some candidate or other had been overlooked during the compiling of the lists, according to the Soviets that could only have happened through the fault of the candidate him or herself, and that person could only request a "foreign passport," nothing more.⁶⁰⁶

However, as applications for repatriation piled up, questions emerged about the position of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Czechoslovak citizens living on its territory. The official Soviet response was very elegant and, when compared with the reality, its formulation can only evoke cynicism. We learn of it from an aide mémoire about the legal and political position of Czechoslovak citizens in the USSR handed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union to the Czechoslovaks on 18 September 1948:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR is pleased to inform you that Czechoslovak citizens on the territory of the USSR can expect, insofar as their persons and their property are concerned, a similarly favorable treatment on the part of the Soviet authorities as is reserved for members of a nation enjoying the maximum advantages. They are placed on the same level as Soviet citizens, enjoying the freedom of speech, information, religion and association in accordance with the constitution and with legislative regulations. Czechoslovak citizens, like all other foreigners, are judged in the same way as citizens of the USSR.⁶⁰⁷

Conclusion

The Soviet Gulag was incontestably one of the great evils of the twentieth century, turning into a concept which long ago went beyond its original meaning. In her recent and comprehensive work which will be difficult to surpass, the journalist Anne Applebaum wrote:⁶⁰⁸

This is a history of the Gulag: a history of the vast network of labour camps that were once scattered across the length and breadth of the Soviet Union, from the islands of the White Sea to the shores of the Black Sea, from the Arctic Circle to the plains of central Asia, from Murmansk to Vorkuta to Kazakhstan, from central Moscow to the Lenin-grad suburbs. Literally, the word GULAG is an acronym, meaning *Glavnoe upravlenie lagerey*, or Main Camp Administration. Over time, the word “Gulag” has also come to signify not only the administration of the concentration camps but also the system of Soviet slave labour itself, in all its forms and varieties: labour camps, punishment camps, criminal and political camps, women’s camps, children’s camps, transit camps. Even more broadly, “Gulag” has come to mean the Soviet repressive system itself, the set of procedures that prisoners once called the “meat-grinder”: the arrests, the interrogations, the transport in unheated cattle cars, the forced labour, the destruction of families, the years spent in exile, the early and unnecessary deaths.

My main aim, as a historian specializing in diplomatic history, has been the study of the diplomatic and foreign policy aspect of these issues. I have tried to clarify the approach taken by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other governmental institutions in solving the issues of deportation and repatriation; the course of negotiations with Soviet diplomats and the plenipotentiary of the Soviet government for repatriation; the development of the attitude taken by the Czechoslovak authorities; the influence that the building of the Soviet bloc had on negotiations; and the context in which the repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens was connected with Soviet policy on repatriation as a whole. I have also tried to identify the deported civilians, to register them according to name and to ascertain how many there were; in the course of this I have put together

a database of 7,422 persons, by the time of writing. It was at the same time necessary to research the reasons why the Soviet Union deported civilians and under what circumstances deportation came about, even though I am not the first to pose this question. I have recorded several previously unpublished cases and added more facts to existing information about the deportations. I have also summarized the efforts to achieve compensation for the deported in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In the course of this I have had the opportunity to interpret in more detail some connected themes, up to now less well known – for example, the procedures of Soviet officials during the forced repatriation to the USSR of Soviet citizens from the territory of Czechoslovakia. For the context as a whole I could not fail to mention some issues which have been relatively well treated in literature. These include, for example, the deportation of members of the former Russian and Ukrainian emigration (and other nationalities of the USSR), and the reemigration of Czechs from Volhynia; here too I succeeded in adding material from some previously unknown sources.

The Soviet Union did not respect the Treaty of 8 May 1944, and violated its stipulations. The treaty defined the power of Czechoslovak jurisdiction over Czechoslovak citizens once military operations had come to an end. It did not, however, define the moment when the state of military operations came to an end. Nor did the treaty refer to any band of 70 km, mentioned from time to time in works on the subject. The procedures of the Soviet Union when, under fabricated conditions, it deported civilians to the Gulag, are proof of Soviet despotism and violation without regard to differences in legal philosophy.

Deportations of large groups of the population were used extensively by the Communist regime in the Soviet Union, especially in the Stalinist era, and were justified by reference to the higher interests of society. In dominating territory beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union during the Red Army's advance against the military might of Hitler's Germany and its allies, the Soviet Union proceeded on the same principle, for it already considered this territory to be its own domain. In December 1944 the Soviet government approved a resolution concerning the internment of the German population of Czechoslovakia and other countries for work in the USSR, even though at Yalta Stalin had asserted that the USSR was not yet ready to negotiate over the use of the German labor force as reparation. On 1 February 1946 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow stated that "Soviet soldiers and officers look on Slovakia as though it were a country which had fought against the USSR, and very often approach the issue with this assumption."⁶⁰⁹

I agree with Karel Kaplan, who stated that Moscow would realize its interests in Central Europe without regard to the standpoint of any other country in this area, since at this time there was no power in the world which could act against it, or which would have the courage to do so.⁶¹⁰ I also agree with Petr Prokš standpoint that where deportation and other violations were concerned, the Czechoslovak representatives did not dare provoke conflicts with the Soviet authorities, who regarded Central Europe as their rightful spoils of war.⁶¹¹

The Czechoslovak authorities did not have enough strength to put up any defense against deportation. What attitude did they take when negotiating with the Soviets for the repatriation of the deported? In the first phase the Czechoslovak government rightfully required the immediate return of all deported citizens en bloc to Czechoslovakia. The Soviet side, however, insisted that Czechoslovakia should present lists of the deported and request the repatriation of each deportee individually. The Soviet Union refused to negotiate as long as this principle was not accepted, and in the end the Czechoslovak side resigned itself to this fact, and tried to satisfy it. Czechoslovakia used every available opportunity to reopen the issue of a general solution. The last time was still before February 1948, when Prime Minister Gottwald delivered a memorandum during his visit to Moscow in the summer of 1947. The memorandum, although unsuccessful, was relatively faithful in explaining the problem, and did not overlook the deportation of former Russian and Ukrainian émigrés.

Czechoslovak diplomacy used classic methods of negotiation and tried, with regard to the USSR, to behave considerately toward an allied and friendly country. The behavior of the Soviet Union was, to put it mildly, nonstandard. Ambassador Horák provided many well-founded and carefully formulated requirements for the Soviets to which, under democratic conditions, the diplomats would have been obliged respond appropriately. There was, however, no such response from the Soviet side. Czechoslovakia overlooked or ignored an opportunity to win support from the international diplomatic forum. It is, however, a question as to whether in the context of the time, Czechoslovakia would have been capable of acting with initiative at an international level over the return of deported civilians.

In connection with the advancing incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the Soviet sphere and with the increasing influence of the Communists, the position of some influential Czechoslovak institutions vis-à-vis the repatriation of the deported began to change significantly after mid-1947. In the end the Communists' influence led to the acceptance of the selec-

tive principle of approving every individual repatriate. In doing this Czechoslovakia relied on the doubtful privilege provided by the Soviet Union of screening individuals before repatriation.

I point out in my work many examples which show that repatriation was completely in the hands of the Soviet Union which, when it suited its own interest, was capable of accelerating repatriation and in so doing, failed to take into consideration Czechoslovak security controls or the agreed procedures.

The deportation, repatriation and reemigration policy of the Soviet Union was tough. It was unscrupulously implemented in the interests of the Soviet Union, and at the expense of its own populace and that of other countries. This was evident, for example, in the case of the reemigration of the Volhynian Czechs and in the efforts of the USSR to achieve reciprocal numbers in the repatriation of Soviet citizens from Czechoslovakia.

I would like in conclusion to lay particular emphasis on the following issues:

The Guilt of the Czechoslovak Government in Not Resisting Deportations, and Even Arranging Them

I think that the widespread view, prevalent especially in Slovakia, that the deportation of civilians from Slovakia was agreed between Beneš and Stalin or Beneš and Molotov⁶¹² to punish the Slovaks and to pay for the liberation of Czechoslovakia, does not have any firm foundation in the sources. However, the “policies which would make the Munich Agreement being null and void from the inception,” some documented utterances about punishing the Slovaks, and the fact that the politicians of the Allies were inclined to offer Stalin a workforce as part of German reparations, do leave room for this view. We have to bear in mind that civilians were deported from the territory of other states as well. Stalin had no need to agree the deportations with the heads of other states since he undertook them on his own initiative. Likewise, in my opinion the accusation that the Czechoslovak state did not stand up against the deportations of its citizens and thus failed in its basic function is too rigorous a judgment, for it does not take fully into consideration the historical situation as it was at that time. I agree with Vladislav Moulis, Karel Kaplan and other authors that it was impossible for the Czechoslovak administration, in a state of constitutional emergency and at that time in the process of recreating itself, to prevent these arrests and deportations.⁶¹³ I am, however, convinced that the Czechoslovak authorities did not do everything they could and should have done

for the repatriation of its citizens; that, on the contrary, the situation was abused to dispose of some undesirable individuals on a nationalist basis. In this context the sacrificial endeavors of a few individuals stand out; for them, the repatriation of all the deported was a moral imperative.

An opinion sometimes surfaces that an interest or agreement over the deportations existed in some Czechoslovak political circles. Uncertainty is indicated by the fact that some people think that the prime nemesis was President Beneš, and others think that it was Klement Gottwald and Gustáv Husák, when there is no convincing evidence in either case.

I incline to the opinion that it was not Edvard Beneš but the Slovak Communists who could have had an interest in the deportations of undesirable (for them) individuals. In the critical period for the deportations, between the Red Army's invasion of Slovakia in late autumn 1944 and Beneš's journey from London to Moscow in March 1945, it was the Slovak Communists, in most cases Gustáv Husák, who had the most frequent contact with the supreme Soviet authorities. The national committees, dominated by Communists and radical elements and supported by the Red Army, had a direct and more powerful influence on events on the liberated territory than the Slovak National Council.

The Nationalist Issue, and Communists and Non-Communists in the Course of Negotiations

In a nationalist approach to deportation – with firm roots in the Munich trauma – politicians notoriously behaved according to the Czech nationalist formula: “We have no interest in Germans and Hungarians.” The Communists benefited politically from this nationalist position, standing shoulder to shoulder with the Beneš establishment. Differences of opinion appeared among the diplomats and the bureaucrats in charge of the repatriation agenda, and the instructions and standpoints sent from Prague to the embassy in Moscow were sometimes conflicting. Some non-Communist individuals showed how ethics and morals could be brought to the settlement of the repatriation agenda, and did not hesitate to declare the indispensability of returning all those deported as soon as possible to their native land. However, the criterion of nationalism which refused to accept Hungarians and Germans ran like a red thread through the repatriation negotiations.⁶¹⁴ Formulations of the type “the liquidating of domestic traitors, and of the German and Hungarian minorities”⁶¹⁵ lead one to imagine the worst, even though for the most part the phrase “cleansing society of collaborators and traitors” was used.

The Issue of Citizenship

This question is one of the most complicated and up to now the least researched. There was considerable inconsistency in the policy of state citizenship. Hungarian citizens in Slovakia were dispossessed of Czechoslovak citizenship by Presidential Decree no. 33 of 2 August 1945. Official documents made it clear that Czechoslovakia was not interested in Hungarians and Germans. Nevertheless, Slovak Hungarians and, for example, the Germans of Zips (Spiš) were not banned en bloc from repatriation; the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry accepted requests from their families concerning intervention, and the offices of the local administration included them in the lists. The Czechoslovak authorities required confirmations of political and national reliability – however, the relationship between these confirmations and the Hungarians' loss of Czechoslovak citizenship was never defined.

Reasons for Deportation

According to some authors, the reasons which led the Soviet side to deportation are not yet fully clarified. The following reasons are sometimes given: “a way of gaining a work force to replace its own, fallen in the war,” “minimizing the numbers of voters who might vote against the intended transfer of East Slovakia to the Soviet Union,” and, according to some, even “the beginning of a genocide of the intelligentsia as preparation for a later socialist revolution.”⁶¹⁶ Other suggestions are reparations for the damage done to the Soviet Union by Slovak soldiers fighting alongside Hitler's Germany, with which President Beneš seemed to agree on 23 June 1943,⁶¹⁷ concerning payment for the liberation or a method of reparations from Slovakia.

I think that the reasons for the deportations are no longer surrounded by such mystery as they were at the beginning of the 1990s. The reason for gaining a work force is today proven beyond all doubt, as is the Soviet effort to get rid of the politically uncomfortable or dangerous elite of the Russian, Ukrainian and other anti-Bolshevik emigration in Czechoslovakia. The disposal of undesirable inhabitants is likewise documented in the case of the Hungarians and Germans from Czechoslovakia and, as has been shown by the author Marek Syrný and myself, what is known as the class-political approach, or getting rid of non-Communist leaders at a local level, can likewise be considered to have been proved.

The deportations had a multilayered background. Their economic meaning was evident and was also as an explanation given to the de-

ported. The aim was to replenish a workforce depleted by the war and to boost the Soviet economy, devastated by the war. However, the effectiveness of this intention was, in consequence of the desperate conditions in the camps and the management of the Gulag, more than doubtful. But the economic reason for the deportations was not the only one. Parallel with it ran a geopolitical reason, explained as a specific political intention pure and simple – a cleansing of Slovakia – as an immediate neighbor of the Soviet empire – of people known to be opponents of the Soviet regime and its ideology, and of people who could prevent local Communists from winning key positions in the national committees, security services and so on.⁶¹⁸

In 1994, the Russian historian V.P. Galitsky said in an interview with the author that

the main aim of the deportations was to get rid of certain kinds of people: reactionary elements and collaborators, from territory where elections had still not taken place and where a new order had to be built. It is clear that in such an epoch it was too risky to leave in place a population whose views were undetermined and who might not contribute toward to the new order. Once the elections were over there would be time enough to start negotiating with the Czechoslovak side about the repatriation of the deported. Determining who should be deported ran in cooperation with local “progressive” forces, partisans, Communists. . . . The deportations were agreed with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Moscow during the war, when it was plain that a future government of Czechoslovakia was taking shape there, as a commitment of that future government.

Up to now no documents have been found to confirm this allegation; the only place to find them would be in the Russian archives, but research into these archives is still very limited.

In studying the deportations I noted an interesting shift over the years from the point of view of their justification. In the first half of the 1990s, in Russia and in the Czech and Slovak Republics, there was still a relatively widespread opinion that the Soviet Union, as the state which liberated a large part of Europe and which suffered immeasurable human and material losses, had the right to put prisoners of war, collaborators and exponents of pro-Nazi regimes to work. This argument always had aspirations to be somehow understood. Nowadays this attitude is very rare.

If we blame Beneš for having driven Czechoslovakia into the embrace of Stalin, then we also have to weigh these considerations in the light of the steps taken by Western leaders, as formulated by more than one historian:

Yet not all of our attitudes to the Soviet past are linked to political ideology. Many, in fact, are rather a fading by-product of our memories of the Second World War. We have, at present, a firm conviction that the Second World War was a wholly just war, and few want that conviction shaken. We remember D-Day, the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, the children welcoming American GIs with cheers on the streets. No one wants to be told that there was another, darker side to Allied victory, or that the camps of Stalin, our ally, expanded just as the camps of Hitler, our enemy, were liberated. To admit that by sending thousands of Russians to their deaths by forcibly repatriating them after the war, or by consigning millions of people to Soviet rule at Yalta, the Western Allies might have helped others commit crimes against humanity would undermine the moral clarity of our memories of that era. No one wants to think that we defeated one mass murderer with the help of another. No one wants to remember how well that mass murderer got on with Western statesmen. "I have a real liking for Stalin," the British foreign secretary, Anthony Eden, told a friend, "he has never broken his word." There are many, many photographs of Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt all together, all smiling.⁶¹⁹

Appendix

1. Agreement Concerning the Relationship between the Czechoslovak Administration and the Soviet High Command after the Entry of Soviet Troops on Czechoslovak Territory⁶²⁰

The government of the Republic of Czechoslovakia and the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, desiring that the relationship between the Soviet High Command and the Czechoslovak administration on the territory of the Republic of Czechoslovakia after the entry of Soviet troops on Czechoslovak territory be arranged in the spirit of friendship and alliance, have decided the following:

Article 1

As soon as Soviet (allied) troops enter Czechoslovak territory as the outcome of military operations, supreme power and responsibility in all matters relating to the conduct of the war in the zone of military operations for the period necessary to carry out these operations will fall to the Supreme Commander of the Soviet (allied) troops.

Article 2

A Czechoslovak governmental delegate for the liberation of the territory will be named, and his task will be:

- a) to organize and conduct according to Czechoslovak laws the administration on the territory liberated from the enemy
- b) to reestablish the Czechoslovak armed forces there
- c) to ensure the active cooperation of the Czechoslovak administration with the Soviet (allied) Supreme Command and especially to give local offices the appropriate orders on the basis of the needs and wishes of the Soviet (allied) Supreme Command

Article 3

Czechoslovak troops which in the course of the entry of the Soviet (allied) armies on Czechoslovak territory be in union with them, will immediately be deployed on Czechoslovak territory.

Article 4

On the securing of contact between the Soviet (allied) High Command and the Czechoslovak government delegate a Czechoslovak military mission will be established at the Soviet (allied) High Command.

Article 5

Czechoslovak government organs in liberated territory in zones under the highest authority of the Soviet (allied) High Command will be in contact with Soviet (allied) High Command through the Czechoslovak government delegate.

Article 6

As soon as some part of the liberated territory ceases to be a zone of actual military operations, the Czechoslovak government will take over full control of public administration there and will provide the Soviet (allied) High Command with many-sided cooperation and help through their civil and military organs.

Article 7

All persons belonging to the Soviet (allied) troops on Czechoslovak territory will be subject to the jurisdiction of the Soviet (allied) Commander. All persons belonging to the Czechoslovak armed powers will be subject to Czechoslovak jurisdiction. The civilian population on Czechoslovak territory is subject likewise to this jurisdiction, including cases where criminal actions committed against the Soviet (allied) troops are concerned, unless these were committed in the zone of military operations. Such cases fall under the jurisdiction of the Soviet (allied) High Command. In contestable cases the matter will be solved by a mutual agreement between the Soviet (allied) High Command and the Czechoslovak governmental delegate.

Article 8

A special agreement will be negotiated concerning financial matters connected with the entry of Soviet (allied) troops on Czechoslovak territory.

Article 9

The agreement becomes valid immediately after being signed. It will be prepared in two copies, each in the Czechoslovak and Russian language. The two versions will be of equal validity.

London, 8 May 1944

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of State

Hubert Ripka

On behalf of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR to the Government of the Republic of Czechoslovakia

Victor Zacharevich Lebedev

2. The Number of Czechoslovak Citizens Deported and the Number Repatriated at the End of World War II and in the Postwar Period: Estimates in Publications

Number of Deportees and of Repatriates from Slovakia

There have been divergences from the very beginning about the number of Slovak citizens deported to the Soviet camps. Some conclusions which did not distinguish between prisoners of war and civilian deportees and did not take into account the data the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had available in 1945-1946 had a broad impact both in Czechoslovakia before February 1948, and in Slovak émigré circles in the West.

Some of the data are cited by Robert Letz:⁶²¹

Ladislav Moyš, the Slovak Roman Catholic priest and former Uzhgorod district chief writes in his letter to Stalin and to President Beneš of 21 November 1945: "There are allegedly 25,000 Slovak captives in Russia. It has been ascertained that 150 judges and whole villages from East Slovakia have been taken into captivity. Novy Donbas lies near Stalino in the Donets basin. There are 1,000 Slovaks in Novy Donbas and 1,000 in the neighboring coal mines." In 1947 Ludovít Linczény, deputy of the Legislative National Assembly for the Democratic Party, informed parliament that there had been 30,000 abducted to the Soviet Union. The British diplomats Parrott and Thomas refer in their reports to 20,000 abducted to the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak ambassador to the UN, Ján Papánek, spoke of 12,000 abducted to the Soviet Union, based on an announcement by the state secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Vladimír Clementis.

The figure of "some 20 thousand Slovaks... deported to Russia,"⁶²² was later the most frequent figure published in the West, probably based on the statements given by the British diplomats.

In the first articles on the subject published in the years immediately following the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia, the figures reached hundreds of thousands. That is not surprising. People who experienced mass deportations when whole villages in Slovakia were abducted or when the elite of the Russian and Ukrainian emigration was deported, must have had an overwhelming impression of the extent of the deportations. Mečislav Borák correctly warns that the tendency to overevaluate the number of deported persons at the beginnings of research is not confined to the Czech and Slovak Republics, and that these tendencies also appear in Poland.

In 1992 Štěpán Pazdera from the registration center of the Confederation of Political Prisoners in Prešov estimated the number of deportees at

45,000 to 55,000. This number is, however, very much inflated, as is the full number of 100,000 deportees which Pazdera claims in a number of articles and interviews. Pazdera's figures were quoted relatively frequently at the beginning of the 1990s.⁶²³

In 1944-1945 around 100,000 people were abducted to seventy labor camps in the USSR. Among them were Czechs, Moravians, citizens of ethnic minorities and above all Slovaks. Two-thirds of them died in the camps. In some camps there were ninety people dying every day.⁶²⁴

One hundred thousand is by far the highest number to appear in connection with deportations from the territory of Czechoslovakia to the USSR and it is no wonder that at the beginning of the 1990s it evoked a considerable response and interest in the issue of the deportations. At this time the Prešov committee of the Confederation of Political Prisoners of Slovakia estimated that "only one-third of the abductees from the Soviet Gulags returned home. Of them, apparently 2,976 persons have survived up until today and have registered with the center in Prešov."⁶²⁵

And yet we come across high figures even nowadays. They were advocated by, for example, Vladimír Bystrov who in one of his last works (2003) supposed that "from the beginning of the year until spring 1945 there were 10,000 persons from the territory of Slovakia forcibly deported to the USSR."⁶²⁶ I consider this to be an overestimate which cannot be confirmed by a study of the sources. The contemporary state of knowledge inclines toward a more modest figure.

Ladislav Boroň, author of the study "Násilne odvlečení do Sovietskeho zväzu" (Forced Abduction to the Soviet Union) in the two-part work *Zločiny komunizmu na Slovensku* (The Crimes of Communism in Slovakia) writes:

The current state of documentation concerning abducted persons and prisoners of war allows only an estimation of the numbers of abducted persons. Taking into consideration the inaccuracy of the afore-mentioned records, the incompleteness of the archives and other deficiencies of documentation, the number of abducted persons from Slovakia can perhaps be estimated at 5,000 to 7,000 persons. Of these maybe one-fifth did not return. From the word-of-mouth evidence of former abducted persons who are still with us, it can be established that every fifth deportee did not survive. It is estimated that maybe 30,000 men from occupied south Slovakia joined the Hungarian Army, of which maybe 25,000 returned home again.⁶²⁷

According to Robert Letz, Dárius Rusnák, director of the National Archive of the Slovak Republic in Bratislava said that:

The divergences of information can perhaps be explained by inaccuracy, or more likely, Gustáv Husák's 1946 ban on any internal research into those deported to the Soviet Union, or by inadequate differentiation of individual categories of the deported. There was another category of captives—that is, members of the German, Hungarian and Slovak armies captured without weapons in Slovakia—besides the abducted civilians. However, many contestable cases appear. Further criteria which we must not overlook concern the ethnicity of the deported. . . . The most realistic is information about 10,000 abducted which relates only to the territory of Slovakia and includes civilians without regard to ethnic membership.⁶²⁸

Dušan Slobodník, the first chairman of the Slovak Association of Those Forcibly Abducted, estimated the same number of “10,000 forcibly abducted to the USSR by organs of the NKVD.”

Vladislav Moulis also inclined toward 10,000 deported civilians from the territory of Slovakia in his work *Podivné spojení* (Strange Alliance).⁶²⁹ Peter Juščák has a chapter entitled “So, How Many . . . ?” in his book *Odvečení* (Abducted).⁶³⁰ He places chief emphasis on the individual human stories which were the main subject of his study. He compiled information from published sources about the number of deportees concluding that 60,000 soldiers of the Slovak Army fought together with the German Army on the Soviet front and that there could have been up to 55,000 civilians and prisoners of war (from Czechoslovakia) in Soviet internment and labor camps, but adds that these numbers may not be exact.

Peter Juščák further cites data from a study by the Slovak historian Michal Barnovský,⁶³¹ who came to believe that the number of the abducted from Slovakia would be more than 6,000. Barnovský counts Hungarians and Germans among the deported, but not those abducted from Subcarpathian Rus nor the prisoners of war. I agree with this approach.

Mečislav Borák from the Silesian Museum in Opava reached the same opinion as Barnovský regarding the number of civilians deported from Slovakia. According to him 6,000 persons (of which 2,500 were Slovaks) were abducted from Slovakia, of which at least a third perished (around 2,000 persons).⁶³²

However, Vladimír Bystrov, who includes the deportations from Subcarpathian Rus in his work, gives “thousands of deported persons from Subcarpathian Rus”;⁶³³ or, more generally, he claims that there were deported from the territory of Subcarpathian Rus:

an undetermined number of representatives of the former Czechoslovak government in Subcarpathian Rus before the Hungarian occupation in 1939, and from winter 1943/44 to June 1944 an unascertained number of de jure Czechoslovak citizens were deported, before the territory was officially handed over to the USSR.⁶³⁴

Mečislav Borák gives an estimate of 40,000 abducted from Subcarpathian Rus to the end of the war, but is not sure whether we can include this data in our figures, because the territory was already being transferred to the USSR and we have no information about the victims.

Number of Deported and Repatriated People from the Territory of Today's Czech Republic

Vladimír Bystrov devoted most of his attention, both in research and as a journalist, to the deportation of members of the former Russian and Ukrainian emigration living mainly in Prague. He recorded about 250 cases of deportation of which around two-thirds perished in the Gulag, noting that the complete number of deported Russian and Ukrainian émigrés cannot be reconstructed. He judged that this group could be estimated at about 1,000 deportees.⁶³⁵

Bystrov additionally mentioned cases of deportations from Silesia and Moravia where, however, there are no archival documents that give the numbers. He also wrote about an unascertained number of Czech réémigrés from Soviet Russia. These had left their Czech communities after the Bolsheviks came to power, and returned to Czechoslovakia. Here, however, we are in the field of guesswork. Vladislav Moulis in his study already quoted writes that “[i]n the capital city (arrests) began two days after the arrival of the Red Army and 104 people are recorded as being held in the course of May. It continued in subsequent months, the complete number of abducted reaching 1,000.”⁶³⁶

Moulis came to the same conclusion as Bystrov. The number of deported members of the Russian and Ukrainian emigration given in 1991 in the article “Náš člověk na Gulagu” (Our Compatriot in the Gulag)⁶³⁷ was overtaken long ago—it should have been 2,000 persons. Mečislav Borák⁶³⁸ succeeded in establishing that around 300 persons were abducted from the territory of today's Czech Republic at the end of the war or shortly after, of which at least 200 perished. The estimate of 500 abducted and 300 victims is one of the lowest figures we meet in the sources.

Entire Number of Czechoslovak Citizens in the Gulag

The total number of persons with Czechoslovak citizenship interned in the camps of the Soviet Union is for the most part given as approximately 70,000 and relies on official information from the Soviet Union. In December 1991 the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow was informed, in

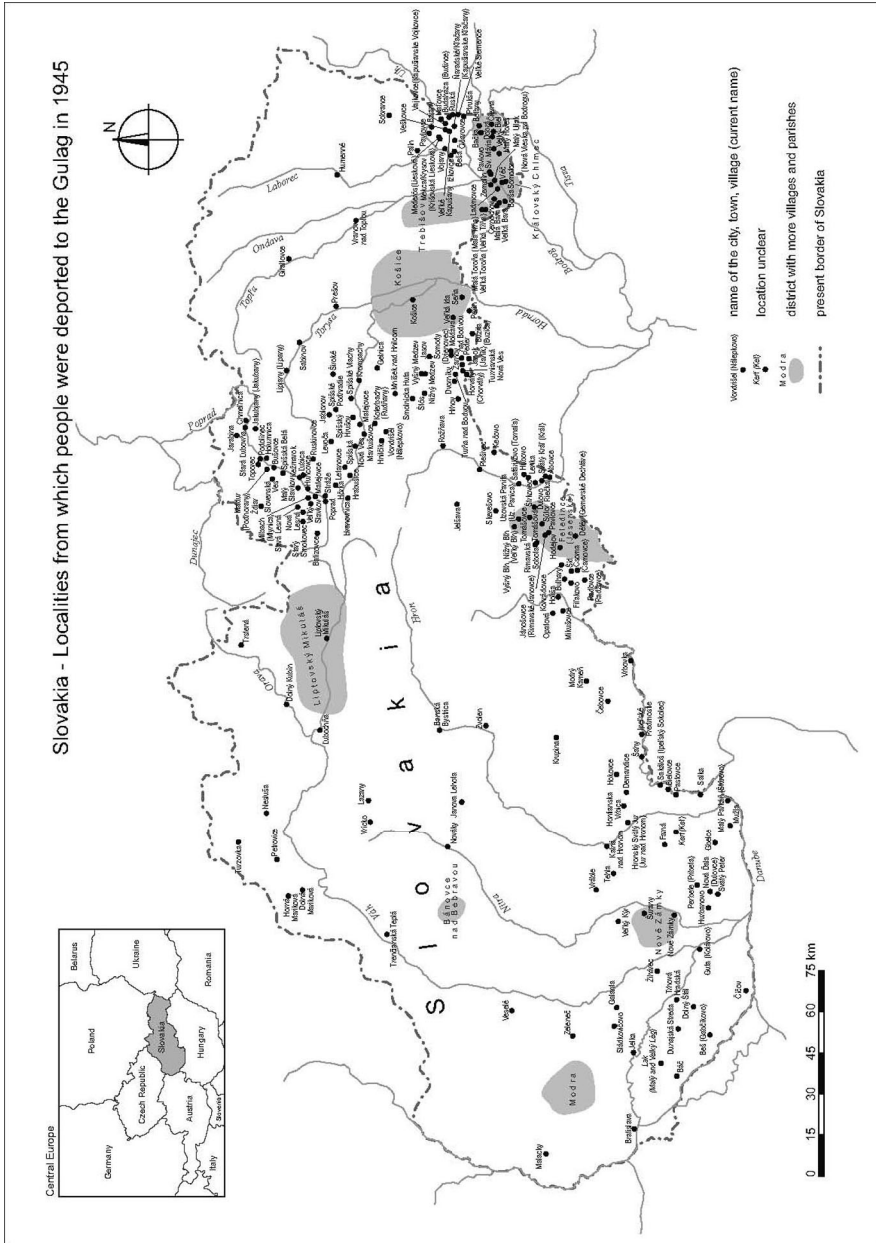
reply to a request from Ambassador Rudolf Slánský about the relevant archives being made available, that there is information in the “Osobennyi Arkhiv” (Special Archive) about 69,977 Czechoslovak persons of whom 2,502 prisoners of war and 345 internees died in the camps. According to Slánský this was “the first big ‘breakthrough’ into the—until then—strictly closed Soviet archives.”⁶³⁹

The Russian military historian V.P. Galitsky published a series of articles about prisoners of war, the camps for them and the internees. He writes that from 22 June 1941 to 2 September 1945 there were 69,977 prisoners of war from Czechoslovakia.⁶⁴⁰

Tamara Juríková from the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising in Banská Bystrica wrote that data about Czechoslovak prisoners of war essentially diverge; nevertheless she gives from the Russian source the same total number of recorded Czechoslovak prisoners of war: 69,977, which was 2% of all recorded prisoners of war. She gives the complete number of repatriated Czechoslovaks as 65,815.⁶⁴¹ Mečislav Borák similarly states that there were 70,000 Czechoslovak prisoners of war and that around 4,500 persons perished in captivity.⁶⁴²

In writing this study, I amassed the names and other specific data for altogether 7,422 deportees. I am aware that this data could be corrected by further research; however, the difference would be around a few dozen, not hundreds or thousands. The result of this work is included in this study, and in the attached commentary I explain the methodology of putting together the database.

3. Map of Slovakia: Localities from Which People Were Deported to the Gulag in 1945



5. Commentary on the List of Civilians Deported from the Territory of Czechoslovakia to the USSR at the End of World War II

I have 7,422 names in the database of persons deported at the end of World War II from the territory of Czechoslovakia to the USSR. This database is an electronic component of this monograph and is available on the homepage of Central European University Press: <http://www.ceupress.com/>. The database is not conclusive and is being updated whenever new or more precise information emerge based on continuing research.

Two impulses contributed to the idea of trying to compile a list of deported persons right at the start of my research in 1992. One was the huge differences in the estimates of the number of the deported I was recording at that time, which set me thinking as to whether it would be possible to find out the exact numbers, or at least to come close. I was given a second impulse by the lists which came into my hands while working in the Archive of the Foreign Ministry in Prague, and which made me wonder whether they could be used to determine the number of deported civilians, and to put together all their names.

Many lists had survived, mainly in the paperwork of the desk for the USSR from 1945 to 1959, but also in the records of the Legal Section and of the General Secretariat. There were also materials in the Records of the embassy in Moscow and in the Cabinet of the minister. The repatriation and reemigration agenda could also be found in the records of the consular section. However, it was clearly insufficient just to add up the names from these lists. The lists were prepared at intervals in time based on centralized instructions and progressed from the local level to the higher authorities until in the end they reached the Foreign Ministry, which passed them to the Moscow embassy. These lists were compiled, transcribed, frequently duplicated, or selectively duplicated, while when it came to deportations, the lists were missing from several localities. The lists are, however, the most important source for determining the number of the deported and therefore I had to make the maximum use of them, while still being aware of their inaccuracies. Another source supplementing the lists consisted of the repatriation documents of individuals.

Some lists contain the names of the deported classified according to ethnicity, but there are also lists classified by profession and by date of internment. Some lists also include the date of birth and date of arrest; sometimes, especially with the later lists, even the name of the camp is given, but often in a very garbled form. For example, Yenakievo was written as Inakov.

The work on the database was very difficult to start with. One problem in the early 1990s was the lack of suitable computer software which would have made it possible to bring the data together and work with them. The first partial list of the deportees which I presented in 1994 when applying for a grant from the Central European University contained around 2,000 names.

The sources processed in the database I now present consist above all of the lists from the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which I tried to use comprehensively, without being able to lay claim to hundred percent completeness. It cannot be ruled out that there are still some lists undiscovered in the extensive Archive of the Foreign Ministry. I do not, however, think that finding more lists would influence the database in any major way. Inasmuch as the lists were prepared, transcribed, compiled and distributed among the relevant departments of the Foreign Ministry, at a certain point they repeat themselves and overlap. I made additional use of data from correspondence with family members and institutions who turned to the Foreign Ministry with requests for intervention, and from other written material of the ministry which contained what I needed—the first name, the surname and a statement which indicated that this was a civilian abductee—or at least, where it was not specifically stated that it concerned a prisoner of war.

Another important source for this database was the documentation of SANO (Slovak Association for Those Forcibly Abducted) and I was very grateful to have access to this. The basis of SANO's documentation is made up of questionnaires completed by the deportees or their family members as part of an application for compensation for the period they were interned in the Soviet Union. Applications for compensation relating to Act 319/91 Sb. concerned only civilian deportees—former prisoners of war were not covered by the act. According to SANO, the documents were under the name of the abductee even when the husbands, wives or children of deportees were making the application for compensation as heirs. With a view to the fact that the public in Slovakia followed the passing of the act about compensation very closely and that the media devoted extensive coverage to it, it could have escaped only a very few of the surviving deportees or their family members. We can assume that applications for compensation represent one of the most complete documentations on civilians deported from Slovakia, and that it covers the great majority of deported civilians.

Nevertheless, some problems did emerge in the course of more detailed work with the SANO documentation. Even though it was stated as

a principle that the documentation concerned exclusively civilian deportees, I was not a hundred percent convinced. In the filing cabinets of SANO I caught a few names whom I knew to belong to the category of prisoners of war. If I could safely verify from other sources that the person concerned was not an abducted civilian I did not include them in my database. But I cannot rule out that from the huge amount of SANO documentation some individuals who were not civilians may have entered my database.

I moreover have the feeling that even though SANO stated that documents had to be always under the name of the deportee, and one number allocated to one deportee, I was not sure that this principle had always been adhered to. I found that in some cases I had the name of a deportee documented from archive sources, but found in the SANO documentation a name indicating a relationship which could only concern a family member of the deportee. I noticed this above all in the case of people with unusual names, where the similarity was very striking. However, I always left these cases as they stood in the database and did not emphasize them. It could always happen that brothers and sisters were deported, or a married couple, or two deportees who later married. Only if it was clearly demonstrated that none of these cases applied did I delete people of the same name from the database. According to the registration numbers, it also seemed that one and the same abductee was sometimes entered several times, which probably happened when several heirs applied for compensation. This conflicted with the principle that there should be one document under one number allocated to each abductee, as sometimes a new document was started in error.

Since I was collecting such a large amount of data from different filing systems in different places, I proceeded by putting all the names into the database and waited until the end of the work to organize all the entries alphabetically and delete obvious duplications.

In many cases the original fragmented data was gradually supplemented from other sources, and having fed the data into the database, the alphabetic ordering enabled me either to confirm the persons in the database or to delete them, if it could be safely demonstrated that they were not deported civilians. I was very careful about the process of removing duplicate names from the database, always on the principle of "measure twice, cut once." Where the same name seemed to appear quite frequently, one had to allow that there could be deportees of the same name from different corners of Slovakia. Even in neighboring localities we find people of the same first and second name and very close dates of birth.

I could not avoid noticing that dates of birth given in the documentation were frequently incorrectly entered. Sometimes the mistake was quite plain and I had no doubts about removing duplicates from the database. They are mainly cases where the day and month were entered in the wrong order, such as when we have the dates 8.9.1912 and 9.8.1912 entered against identical names. I was happy to find such cases among the thousands in my database. I had to proceed carefully, however, because not every such case is a typing error and it can be that there really are two people with the same name and almost identical dates of birth. In some cases it concerned cousins living in neighboring villages. Given the low mobility of country dwellers, this can happen quite frequently.

I also had to keep in mind that in some cases the surname is not always written in a unified way and so it is possible that surnames occur in the database in forms not used by relatives today. There are still greater shifts in the transcription of names from Russian. When we have at our disposal a list of repatriates given to the Czechoslovak authorities by the Soviets, we have to work with names transcribed into Cyrillic, so frequently one can only reconstruct the correct form very roughly, especially if the name is of German or Hungarian origin. The computer too keeps strictly to the length of the vowel, and therefore lists the surname Tóth separately from Toth. The same applies to Kovács/Kovacs, Nágy/Nagy and a number of other names. So we have to look for people with the surname Kovacs also under Kováč, Kovács and so on.

Names from the Czech lands frequently appear in the lists; most of them members of the “white emigration.” To identify deported members of the former Russian and Ukrainian (and other) emigration I used materials from the “They Were the First” Committee and from specialist literature.

Sudeten Germans also appear in the lists of repatriates; these cases were, with a few exceptions, shown to be prisoners of war. I did not include the prisoners of war in the database, but I did process those in whose case it was not clear.

My database is based above all on the lists of deportees. These were as a rule prepared by the local councils or the local police stations on the basis of central instructions, and insofar as they give exactly when and where the deportation took place, and in some cases other data, they are relatively reliable sources.⁶⁴³ The Slovak historian Ladislav Boroň doubts the informative value of lists predominantly from south and south-east Slovakia, where according to him 99% of the local councils and police stations included deported civilians and prisoners of war together in the lists, and even persons arrested by the Gestapo.

The lists are often divided into deported civilians and missing persons—prisoners of war; but as has already been said, not all the lists from every locality from which deportations took place have survived. Similarly problematic are the lists of the repatriation transports, very often indicated to be lists of prisoners of war, of repatriated persons, or of repatriated deported persons. It cannot be known with certainty how many civilians are mixed with prisoners of war.

It can, however, be anticipated that the population from the parishes outside the area occupied by Hungary in south Slovakia were for the most part deported civilians, with the exception of those held for defense work to Hungary, *Levente* and soldiers of the Slovak Army. On the other hand, a great many civilians were also deported from the parishes occupied by Hungary. For example, a considerable number of people were held in Feledince on 11 January 1945. These really were civilians, for on that day the parish did suffer from a widespread detention of local people. A number of deportees give Tomašovce in what was at that time the district of Feledince as their birthplace, dwelling place and place of arrest, and one therefore anticipates that this was a mass deportation of local people. Vyšný Blh and Nižný Blh were likewise parishes which fell to Hungary, and from which practically all the civilians were abducted en bloc.

By contrast, the parish of Csoma in south Slovakia showed a large number of deportees but with many prisoners of war among them—soldiers in the Hungarian Army. We find relatively frequently in archive documents data about the arrest of persons (we know from the context they are soldiers) who give their birthplace as Csoma. Natives of Csoma were arrested on the Eastern front in 1942 and 1943; in the case of some of them the place of arrest is given as Budapest. Even several homeless deportees claim they are from Csoma, and other people from Csoma claim to have been arrested in Hungary during the retreat of the Hungarian Army. I mention these cases to show how varied is the evidence of archive materials.

In our present state of knowledge it is impossible to ascertain, by comparing the whole database of deportees with the lists of those who returned, how many people did not return from the USSR. The lists are incompatible, mainly because prisoners of war are also given in the lists of returnees; because many people were repatriated without getting on the lists; and because others returned on their own account. Moreover, the exchange of populations with Hungary ran contemporaneously with the repatriation of Hungarian prisoners of war and civilian deportees.

I have in the database concentrated primarily on the names of the deportees and on the reference to the source. Other data, such as the birth-

place, dwelling place or other notes, I have given only selectively and for the sake of orientation, since it is possible to look someone up according to the reference to the source. I give as the source the name of the records, box and fascicle in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague (AMZV), the documentation of the “They Were the First” Committee, or the title of the specialist literature; in other cases I refer to the record number in the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic, under which a document is deposited in SANO’s documentation in Bratislava.

6. Overview of Repatriations to Slovakia According to District (to 31 January 1949)

				Returned					Nationality							
District	Total	POWs	Interned	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	Slovaks	Re-Slovak.	Hungar.	Germans	Ruthen.	Croats	Czechs	Jews
Banská Bystrica	3	3		2		1			3							
Banská Štiavnica	1		1	1					1							
Bardejov	24		24	9	3	12			22				2			
Bratislava	7	4	3	2		2	3		4		1		2			
Brezno	7	6	1	7					6	1						
Bytča	6	5	1		6				6							
Čadca	1	1				1			1							
Dolný Kubín	16	8	8	16					16							
Dunajská Streda	416	370	46	39	18	104	237	18	6	18	391					
Galanta	700	700		87	89	133	367	24	226	104	370					
Gelnica	102	4	98	30	20	20	30	2	10	1	9	80	2			
Giraltovce	27	27		17	6	4			27							
Humenné	25		25	6		19			25							
Hurbanovo	493	477	16	112	65	99	216	1	166	92	235					
Ilava	4	4			4				4							
Jesenské	466	440	17	95	28	113	220	10	18	34	414					
Kežmarok	103	2	101	35	14	36	18		28	15	14	44	1		1	
Komárno	808	804	4	158	66	149	397	38	15	55	738					
Košice	431	402	29	246	124	33	28		332	94	5					
Kráľ Chlmec	443	291	152	145	57	65	174	2	2	373	68					
Kremnica	10	5	5	6	2	2			3	1	6					
Krupina	265	258	7	64	38	50	105	8	17	177	71					
Kys. Nové Mesto																
Levice	129	127	2	25	14	27	60	3	55	26	48	1				
Levoča	62	1	61	20	11	26	5	58	1	2	1					
Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš	47	1	46	32	4	11			46			1				

[illegible]

Šafárikovo	244	239	5	38	33	69	107	3	6	49	189						
Šala	352	347	5	68	54	77	144	9	54	106	192						
Šamorín	283	281	2	38	26	60	140	19	10	26	246	1					
Šturovo	667	627	40	47	56	168	380	16	98	80	489						
Topoľčany	1	1				1			1								
Trebišov	325	287	38	215	74	24	12		262	58	5						
Trenčín	19	17	2	1	15	2	1		17		1	1					
Tmava	41	26	15	3	30	8			41								
Trstená	5		5			5			5								
Turč. Sv. Martin	13	8	5	2	3	6	2		7			6					
Vel. Kapušany	343	149	194	147	82	45	68	1	48	112	182						
Vráble	152	152		59	27	16	48	2	48	60	44						
Vranov	11	4	7		6	5			11								
Vysoké Tatry	11		11	2	4	3	2		5	3	1	2					
Zl. Moravce	11	11			11					11							
Zvolen	6	5	1		3	2	1		5		1						
Želiezovce	326	320	6	36	39	79	160	12	60	63	203						
Žilina	8	4	4	1	6	1			8								
Úhrn	9 800	8 156	1 644	2 505	1 522	1 959	3 619	195	2 699	2 318	4 517	204	58	2	1	1	1

According to announcement of those returned, up to the end of January 1949.

AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8. Re-Slovak: Reslovakized; Hungar.: Hungarians; Ruthen.: Ruthenians

Notes

Introduction

- 1 Václav Pavlíček, “Dekrety prezidenta republiky,” in Jech and Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*.
- 2 For this passage I relied mainly on these works: Kaplan, *Československo v letech*; Kaplan, *Poválečné Československo*; Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu*; Kaplan, *Pražské dohody*. I also used Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*; Jan Kuklík, *Londýnský exil a obnova československého*; Němeček et al., eds., *Od rozpadu Česko-Slovenska do uznání československé prozatímní vlády*; Jan Kuklík, “Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940–1945,” in Jech et al., *Němci a Maďaři v dekrettech prezidenta republiky*, 19–114.
- 3 See particularly: Beňa, “Štátoprávne postavenie Slovenska roku 1945,” 65–71.
- 4 Rychlík, “Genéze vzťahu mocností k možnosti samostatného Slovenska,” 121.
- 5 Lipták, “Slovensko v predvečer prevratných udalostí,” 12.
- 6 Ibid., 14.
- 7 Mikuš, *Pamäti slovenského diplomata*, 98.
- 8 Korček, “Modifikácie režimu Slovenskej republiky,” 23.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 The Hlinka Guard, founded in 1938, was a radical nationalist militia of the pro-Nazi Slovak Republic (1939–1945). Named after Slovak politician, Catholic priest and advocate of autonomy of Slovakia Andrej Hlinka (1864–1938), the Hlinka Guard acted under the strong influence of the SS and was responsible for the persecution of Czechs, Roma and Jews and finally for the deportation of the Slovak Jews to Auschwitz. Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party had a history going back before establishment of independent Czechoslovakia. Between the two world wars it was a major advocate of Slovak autonomy and during World War II it was the dominant political party in Slovakia. Its chairmen were Andrej Hlinka and, during World War II, Jozef Tiso, who was executed after the war. The Hlinka Youth was a youth organization in Slovakia guided by the principles of Catholicism and nationalism. After the establishment of an independent Slovakia as a satellite of Nazi Germany, the Hlinka Youth was increasingly influenced by Hitler jugend.
- 11 Korček, “Modifikácie režimu Slovenskej republiky,” 30.
- 12 Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu*, 165.
- 13 Kameněc, “Pokusy reprezentantov Slovenskej republiky, 37–38.

- 14 Ferdinand Čatloš (1895–1972), Slovak military officer and politician, minister of defense of the pro-Nazi Slovak Republic.
- 15 Kameněc, “Pokusy reprezentantov Slovenskej republiky, 42.
- 16 Milan Hodža (1878–1944), Czechoslovak politician of Slovak nationality, prime minister of Czechoslovakia (1935–1938) and, serving in a number of other important positions, advocate of Central European cooperation and integration. Štefan Osuský (1889–1973), Czechoslovak politician and diplomat of Slovak nationality, activist in the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovak plenipotentiary minister in France, after occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis participated in the resistance movement in exile and became an opponent of Czechoslovak President in exile Edvard Beneš.
- 17 Lukáč, “Milan Hodža,” 78.
- 18 Ibid., 42.
- 19 Ibid., 35.
- 20 Ibid., 69.
- 21 Pavlíček, “Dekrety prezidenta republiky,” in Jech and Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*.
- 22 Klimek, “Názory Edvarda Beneše,” 60–61.
- 23 Karol Šmidke, also Schmidke (1897–1952), a Slovak functionary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, active particularly in Slovakia.
- 24 Barnovský, “Kontinuita a diskontinuita,” 73. For an explanation of the terms *Subcarpathian Rus*, *Ruthenia* and *Transcarpathian Ukraine*, see the chapter on Subcarpathian Rus and Transcarpathian Ukraine in Part I, Section II.
- 25 Klement Gottwald (1896–1953): editor of a Communist newspaper and a Communist functionary from 1921; from 1929 member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) leadership, responsible for its bolshevization; from 1928 member of the Executive of Comintern; in exile in the Soviet Union from 1938 to 1945; leader of the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in February 1948; in addition, chairman of KSČ from 1929 to 1953, prime minister of Czechoslovakia from 1946 to 1948 and president of Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1953.
- 26 Barnovský, “Kontinuita a diskontinuita,” 73.
- 27 Goněc, “Představy slovenských povstaleckých složek,” 161.
- 28 Barnovský, “Kontinuita a diskontinuita,” 76, 77.
- 29 Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu*, 164; Vnuk, “Ako SNR preberala vládnú moc,” 87.
- 30 Pavlíček, “Dekrety prezidenta republiky,” in Jech and Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*.
- 31 Vnuk, “Ako SNR preberala vládnú moc,” 87.
- 32 Beňa, “Štátoprávne postavenie Slovenska roku 1945,” 70.
- 33 Ibid., 79.
- 34 Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu*, 166.
- 35 Goněc, “Představy slovenských povstaleckých složek,” 161.
- 36 This opinion was expressed by František Vnuk, see Vnuk, “Ako SNR preberala vládnú moc,” 82–91.
- 37 Syrný, “Politická situácia na oslobodenom Slovensku,” 154–168.
- 38 The Board of Commissioners (Zbor povereníkov) was from 1944 to 1960 an executive organ of the Slovak National Council (Slovenská národná rada, SNR). It was established on the territory of the Slovak National Uprising. After the first postwar

elections in 1946 the Board of Commissioners chaired by Gustáv Husák functioned as a government in Slovakia which represented in Czechoslovakia an asymmetrical executive power. Its powers were very limited and after the Communist takeover in February 1948 even more reduced. In 1960 the new constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was adopted and the Board of Commissioners was abolished.

39 Kaplan, *Československo v letech 1948–1953*, 13.

40 Ibid., 14.

41 Data according to Jiří Vykoukal, “Sovětizace, lidová demokracie a komunismus,” in Tejchman et al., *Sovětizace východní Evropy*, 41.

42 Kaplan, *Československo v letech 1948–1953*, 85.

43 Ibid., 86–91.

44 Fischer, ed., *Teheran, Jalta, Potsdam*, 115. See also Kubeš, ed., *Mezinárodní konference 1943–1945. Dokumenty*, (Prague: Svoboda, 1985), 253, 254.

45 Fischer, *Teheran, Jalta, Potsdam*, 185.

46 Vnuk, “Ako SNR preberala vládnú moc,” 88.

47 Ibid.

48 Kaplan, *Československo v letech 1948–1953*, 97.

49 Sbírka zákonů a nařízení Republiky Československé 33/45, quoted in Kaplan, *Československo v letech 1948–1953*, 100.

50 Ibid., 21.

51 Beňa, “Štátoprávne postavenie Slovenska roku 1945,” 67.

52 Letz, “Činnost sovietských orgánů NKVD,” 106.

53 Syrný, “Politická situácia na oslobodenom Slovensku.”

54 Letz, “Činnost sovietských orgánů NKVD,” 103, 104.

55 Ibid., 107, 108.

56 Ibid., 108, 109.

57 Čierna-Lantayová, “Koncepčia slovenskej politiky k otázkam hraníc s Maďarskom,” 131–140.

58 For this passage I relied mainly on these sources: Pavlíček, “Dekrety prezidenta republiky,” in Jech and Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*; Dejmek, Kuklík and Němeček, *Historické, právní a mezinárodní souvislosti dekretů prezidenta republiky*; Jech, Kuklík and Mihule, eds., *Němci a Maďaři v dekretach prezidenta republiky*.

59 Pavlíček, “Dekrety prezidenta republiky,” in Jech and Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, 11.

60 Ibid., 31.

61 Ibid., 42.

62 Ibid., 34.

63 Kaplan, *Pravda o Československu 1945–1948*, 16, 17.

64 Ibid., 18, 19.

Deportations from Slovakia

65 However, the opinion of the Department VI (the Legal Department of the Foreign Ministry) of 30 January 1946 refers to paragraph 7, that even the civilian population on Czechoslovak soil had to submit to the Soviet Supreme Command, insofar as a criminal act committed against the Soviet military in the war zone was involved. Archive of the

- Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Prague, records of the Territorial Department for the USSR (henceforth AMZV, USSR), 1945–59, box 23, folder 15.
- 66 Valerian A. Zorin (1902–1986): Soviet ambassador to Czechoslovakia, 1945–1947; deputy foreign minister of the USSR, 1947–1965.
- 67 Vladimír Bystrov took a different line, writing: “We overvalue this treaty, since once it had been concluded, each side understood something quite different by it.” Bystrov supported his opinion by saying that the content of the treaty was to some measure a distraction, because Beneš’s government originally intended to close a similar treaty with the British and Americans, but this did not happen. Bystrov also wrote that the treaty did not reflect the distinctive basic legal foundations in the two countries, for Soviet law was derived from the principle of universality and personality, which meant that the Soviet authorities thought it correct to prosecute persons for actions which were—according to Soviet law—criminal, wherever the action took place, by whomever, and against whomever, insofar as the person supposed to be guilty found themselves in the power of the Soviets. Czechoslovak law derived traditionally from the principle of territoriality, according to which only the domestic offices had the right to apprehend and prosecute a native or foreigner on Czechoslovak territory. According to Bystrov this was a completely unsubstantial treaty. Bystrov, *Únosy československých občanů do Sovětského svazu*, 19.
- 68 Syrný, “Politická situácia na oslobodenom Slovensku.”
- 69 GARF, D68.L-153–156.
- 70 The Russian historian V.P. Galitsky refers to his article in the German journal *Horizont* 10 (1990): 20, which, however, the author has not had the opportunity to study.
- 71 The letter is in the personal archive of the author. Vladimír Bystrov also mentioned this case in *Únosy*, 207–210.
- 72 Štefan Pazdera (1924–2010), a fighter against Communism and political prisoner in the uranium mines in Czechoslovakia. After the collapse of Communism, he advocated rehabilitation and compensation of the victims of Communism, particularly of those deported to the Gulag camps in the former Soviet Union. He also revealed the fascist and/or communist past of some Slovak public figures.
- 73 Bystrov, “*Tábor NKVD-MVD SSSR pro válečné a internované*,” in *Únosy*, 278–286; Mečislav Borák, “*Soupis 175 táborů v SSSR, v nichž do 1.2.1952 zemřelo 3,484 čs. válečných zajatců*,” in *Perzekuce občanů z území dnešní České republiky v SSSR*, 202–205. Lists of the camps can also be found in other publications abroad.
- 74 Hanna Arendt, “The Concentration Camps,” *Partisan Review*, July (1948), here taken from Kramer, “Remembering the Gulag.”
- 75 Memoirs of Vojtech Bodnár, published in the SANO bulletin *Návraty* no. 1 (1991): 26.
- 76 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 7.
- 77 Ibid., box 38, folder 13.
- 78 Ibid., box 50, folder 7.
- 79 From a letter written in 1995 by the chairman of the Confederation of Those Persecuted under the Communists in Zvolen, Dobroslav Pustaj, in the personal archive of the author.
- 80 Juščák, *Odvlečení*, 64, 65.
- 81 Ibid., 52.
- 82 Ibid., see chapter “Práca na pár dní.”

- 83 GARF, D93.I.26-45, *Nagrazhdenie rabotnikov NKVD, NKGB SSSR i voennosluzhashchikh voysk NKVD, provodivshikh operatsiyu po mobilizatsii i internirovaniyu lits nemetskoy natsionalnosti na territorii Vengrii, Chekhoslovakii, Rumynii, Bolgarii i Yugoslavii* (Awarding of the Employees of the NKVD, NKGB USSR and the Servicemen of the NKVD Forces That Conducted the Operation to Mobilize and Intern the Persons of German Nationality in the Territory of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia).
- 84 Letz, "Činnost sovietskych orgánov NKVD," 112, 113.
- 85 Martinková, "Náš člověk na Gulagu."
- 86 Jan Čambal, memoirs published in the SANO bulletin *Návraty* no. 1 (1991), and an interview with the author.
- 87 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 59, folder 34, 38.
- 88 Ibid., folder according to name.
- 89 In Borák, *Perzekuce občanů a území dnešní České republiky v SSSR*, 115–123.
- 90 Boroň, "Násilne odvlečení do Sovietského zväzu," 337–365.
- 91 See the chapter "The Repatriation Obligations of the USSR and International Diplomacy."
- 92 AMZV, USSR 1945-59, box 38, folder 6.
- 93 Boroň, "Násilne odvlečení do Sovietského zväzu," 361–363.
- 94 AMZV, USSR 1943-1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder "Prisoners of War."
- 95 Stark, T. "Hungarian prisoners," *Bulletin of the International Committee for the history of the Second World*, no. 27/28 (1995): 225.
- 96 Most of the people given in these lists were held in the Donbas in the camps of Yenakievo 342/29b and Novaya Gorlovka (also Horlovka) 242/23. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 1. See also documents on individuals (for example, Š. Zelenay, Ondrej Lenárth, Emanuel Mikoláš, Ondrej Chlbana, Ladislav Hahn, Alojz Barsalský, Ondrej Kollár, Lambert Hagan, Ladislav Rutšek, Alojz Ján Čendula, Valent Sanoga, Dominik Vart, Ján Černák, Ján Zamborský, Jozef Kotrus, Ján Mikuš, Jozef Jindra, Ladislav Hann, Štefan Milkáš, Karol Kontúr, Jozef Paulo, Klement Pecho-Pečner, Ján Mihelič, Imrich Kužila, Ján Blatnický, Štefan Petráš, Arpad Albrecht). AMZV, USSR 1945–59, boxes 33 and 34.
- 97 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 6.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 A number of applications from family members for intervention are, for example, in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 4, and box 38, folder 2, as well as in other boxes.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 6.
- 102 Ibid., box 37, folder 5.
- 103 These persons are documented in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
- 104 Ibid.
- 105 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
- 106 Ibid., box 37, folder 2.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Stark, "Hungarian prisoners," 205.
- 109 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 7.

- 110 Ibid., box 37, folder 2. List transferred from the Ministry of National Defense to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 November 1947.
- 111 Vnuk, "Ako SNR preberala vládnú moc," 84, 85.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 Slovak National Archive, ÚP-SNR, L-60, box 72. Vnuk, "Ako SNR preberala vládnú moc," 85.
- 114 Vnuk, "Ako SNR preberala vládnú moc," 85.
- 115 Letz, "Činnost sovietskych orgánov NKVD," 112.
- 116 Otáhal, *Sto studentských revolúcií*; the chapter "Co je orální historie" offers an overview of the methodological literature available on oral history.
- 117 On the basis of the memories of Gejza Pásztor, told to the author in November 2001, in the author's documentation. See also Juščák, *Odvlečení*, 226. Géza Pásztor published his memoirs in the Slovak journal *Hlas ľudu*, edited by Dr. Koloman Uhrík.
- 118 See the chapter on the official termination of repatriation where the final intervention for the repatriation of Géza Pásztor and Dr. Fiedler is described.
- 119 GARF, records "9401," Secretariat of the MVD (Ministry of the Interior) of the USSR.
- 120 On Dr. Fiedler, see also Juščák, *Odvlečení*, 236–238.
- 121 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 9.
- 122 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 2, "Soznam zaistených osob maďarskej národnosti za prechodu fronty ČA a odoslaných za hranice ČSR v obci Uzovská Panita, okres Feledince" (List of Detained Persons of Hungarian Nationality in the Uzovská Panita Parish, Feledince District, during the Transition of the Front by the Red Army and Sent across the Czechoslovak Border).
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4.
- 125 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 1.
- 126 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 5.
- 127 Mr. Stybar's address is in the author's documentation.
- 128 The memoirs of Johann Jachmann and Andrej Lang are in the author's documentation.
- 129 Stark, "Hungarian Prisoners," 205.
- 130 SANO Bratislava, file no. 1107/91 (Mr. Šándor's file).
- 131 Vladimir Prokopovich Galitsky, "Vernite dengi," *Voenno-istoričeskij zhurnal* 8 (1998): 28–34.
- 132 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 2.
- 133 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
- 134 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 2.
- 135 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 8.
- 136 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 1, copy of a letter from Jaromír Smutný to Ambassador Zorin of 8 March 1947 for the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Moscow Embassy.
- 137 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 138 Ibid.
- 139 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 8.
- 140 Information according to a letter in the author's personal archive.
- 141 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 1, 30 December 1946.

- 142 Ibid., box 39, folder 2.
- 143 Ibid., folder 5.
- 144 Šebej, “Tieň Kolymy” <http://ferosebej.sk/archiv-lankov/95-tie-kolymy>
- 145 According to a document in the personal archive of Mr. Antal.
- 146 For example: Käthe Fraedrich, *Im Gulag der Frauen* (Munich: Universitas, 1997); Meinhard Stark, *Frauen im Gulag: Alltag und Überleben, 1936 bis 1956* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003).
- 147 Based on personal information from Vladimír Tomiška’s sister, Eva Demková of Bratislava.
- 148 A letter from Mrs. Lichvárová is in the author’s personal archive.
- 149 SANO, Bratislava, Mr. Šufliarský’s file.
- 150 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 Ibid.
- 153 Ibid.
- 154 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 33.
- 155 Ibid.
- 156 Ibid.
- 157 Ibid.
- 158 This story is recounted by Boroň, “Násilne odvlečení do Sovietskeho zväzu,” 356–359.
- 159 See the subsection “Members of the Slovak Technical Division” in Chapter 2 of this book.
- 160 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 1.
- 161 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War” (both documents).
- 162 Ibid., Dispatch no. 481 (Horák 663), sent on 13 November 1945.
- 163 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2.
- 164 Ibid., box 34 and box 38, folder 2.
- 165 Ibid., box 34.
- 166 Ibid.
- 167 Ibid., box 38, folder 6.
- 168 Files on the case of Pavel Burjeta are in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
- 169 Košút, *Cez červený očištec*. Files on the case of Ján Košút are in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
- 170 Dušan Slobodník, *Paragraf: Polárny kruh* (Bratislava, Slovenský spisovateľ, 1991). Files on the case of Dušan Slobodník are in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 1, and box 34.
- 171 Korček, “Modifikácie režimu Slovenskej republiky,” 34.
- 172 Ibid., 35.
- 173 SANO documentation, Bratislava.
- 174 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4.
- 175 Šubert “Omyly ministra Slobodníka.”
- 176 Ladislav Mňačko, “Nechcem byť ‘expertom’ na kauzu Ploština,” *Koridor* (Slovak daily newspaper), 21 August 1992.
- 177 This document was published in *Návraty* no. 3 (1993): 32–33.

- 178 For example: Vladimír Pavlík, "Bude bývalý fašistický prisluhovač Dušan Slobodník znovu licitovat?," *NN* no. 0005/003 (1995).
179 See *Návraty* no. 3 (1993): 32–33.
180 Editorial article "Hanlon neznáša podrazy," *Návraty* no. 3 (1993): 9–12.
181 "Podle obhájce Feldek soud vyhraje," *Lidové noviny*, 25 June 1994.
182 *Lidové noviny*, 30 March 1994.

Other Deportations from Czechoslovakia to the USSR

- 183 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 1, and works by Vladimír Bystrov.
184 *Ibid.*
185 Bystrov, "Odvlečení," 275.
186 *Ibid.*, 278ff.
187 Tatjana Podhájecká, "Ruský periodický tisk vycházející v meziválečném období," *Slovanský přehled* no. 1 (1993): 75, quoted in Bystrov, "Odvlečení," 79.
188 Bystrov, "Odvlečení," 47.
189 *Ibid.*, 278–281.
190 Presented at the colloquium "The Russian (Volunteer) Army: Its History and Importance" (National Library, Prague, 8 November 2000).
191 Bystrov, "Odvlečení," 281–293, 304; also Bystrov, *Únosy*, main chapters V and VI, where a number of details are given about individual deportees.
192 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
193 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 33.
194 *Ibid.*
195 *Ibid.*, folder 1, see also Bystrov, *Únosy*, 85, 95.
196 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
197 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 1.
198 *Ibid.*
199 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
200 *Ibid.*, see also Bystrov, *Únosy*, 59–60, 73.
201 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 33. Dr. Gorokholinsky is listed in the index in Bystrov, *Únosy*, but with some mistakes.
202 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
203 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, boxes 33, 34.
204 Bystrov, "Odvlečení," 295.
205 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
206 Bystrov, "Odvlečení," 302, 303.
207 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 118.
208 *Ibid.*
209 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 23, folder 15, ref. no. 1330-5/11-45-38V/4 of 9 November 1945.
210 *Ibid.*
211 *Ibid.*
212 *Ibid.*
213 Ministry of the Interior, File no. 3495/210-30/9-47-9 of 4 October 1947, quoted in Bystrov, *Z Prahy do Gulagu*, 209.
214 *Ibid.*

- 215 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 23, folder 15, Ministry of the Interior ref. no. 216/S-25/2-1040-V/3 of 12 April 1949.
- 216 Act no. 102/1947 Coll.
- 217 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8.
- 218 Correspondence in the personal archive of the author; see further: Milan Vavroš, *Osudy zlatých pokladov* (Bratislava: Smena, 1967), 71.
- 219 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 135.
- 220 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 23, folder 15.
- 221 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 3.
- 222 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 4, see also Bystrov, “Odvlečení,” 300–301.
- 223 Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, Moscow (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Ministerstva inostrannykh del Rossiiskoi Federatsii, henceforth AVPRF), records “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 27a/6/138a.
- 224 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4.
- 225 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34. On Kryukovsky, see also Bystrov, *Únosy*, 159 and 190.
- 226 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 34.
- 227 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 7.
- 228 Ibid.
- 229 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, folder 3; also box 53, folder 4; telegram from the Moscow embassy, no. 1802/48 of 31 May 1948.
- 230 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4.
- 231 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folders 2 and 4; telegram from the embassy in Moscow to the Foreign Ministry in Prague on 5 October 1948. See also Bystrov, “Odvlečení,” 302.
- 232 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4.
- 233 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 2. See also Bystrov, “Odvlečení,” 302.
- 234 Bystrov, “Odvlečení,” 293, 294.
- 235 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 66.
- 236 Bystrov, “Odvlečení,” 299. Also AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 1, Ministry of the Interior to the Foreign Ministry, 22 July 1946.
- 237 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 23, folder 34, 11 May 1946.
- 238 Bystrov, *Z Prahy do Gulagu*, 195.
- 239 Ibid., 201, 202.
- 240 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 115, 116.
- 241 Bystrov, “Odvlečení,” 311.
- 242 Jech and Kaplan, eds., *Dekrety prezidenta republiky*, 422, 423.
- 243 Ibid., 424–427, Governmental decree no. 61/1945 Coll., about the preparation of the option according to the Treaty between the Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR on Transcarpathian Ukraine of 29 June 1945.
- 244 Ibid., 435–436. Protocol to the Treaty between the Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR on Transcarpathian Ukraine of 29 June 1945, article 2.
- 245 AVPRF, “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 28/I/164a.
- 246 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 35–52.
- 247 AVPRF, records “Vyshinsky,” opis 21/435/29; also the “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 28/155/142, Alexandrov’s memorandum to Vyshinsky of 2 January 1948.

- 248 AVPRF, records “Vyshinsky, opis 12/440/32, however, Golubev’s report to Voroshilov of 11 August 1947 has survived.
- 249 AVPRF, “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 28/155/142.
- 250 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 23–25.
- 251 In the archive of the MID (AVPRF), documents on Transcarpathian Ukraine are primarily in the “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 28/155/142. There are documents here relating to the memorandum of the Soviet–Czechoslovak Liquidation Commission, to the ending of work on the options and resettlement, and files of opinions on questions connected with resettlement, such as the autumn sowing of the fields. Further documents concerning options in Transcarpathian Ukraine are in the records “Vyshinsky,” opis 21/43/239. There is no doubt that the annexation of Transcarpathian Ukraine by the Soviet Union created an extensive agenda; surprisingly, however, very few documents on this issue have survived among the materials belonging to Vyshinsky’s secretariat, and most of those are of little importance.
- 252 Documents on the inhabitants of the Hlučín region are, for example, in AVPRF, records “Vyshinsky,” opis 11/463/28.
- 253 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 13.
- 254 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 50, folder 9 (Adolf Židek).
- 255 Mečiar, Marcel, “Sociální identita obyvatel Hlučínska,” 25–32.
- 256 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 2 (Jiří Teper), box 39, folder 7 (Jan Gajda, returned 21 November 1949), box 50, folder 7 (Jan Volný).

Czechoslovak–Soviet Repatriation Negotiations

- 257 AVPRF, records of IV. European Department (Evropeyskiy otдел), Desk for Czechoslovakia (Referentura po Chekhoslovakii), opis 26/22/134.
- 258 Memorandum from Vyshinsky to Lt. Gen. F.I. Golik, AVPRF, records “Vyshinsky,” opis 10/502/37.
- 259 Vyshinsky, Andrey Yanuaryevich (1883–1954): first deputy of the People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs (1940–1946); deputy (1946–1949); foreign minister of the USSR (1949–1953); first deputy and permanent representative of the USSR to the United Nations (1953–1954).
- 260 See note 258 above.
- 261 Karel Kaplan and Alexandra Špiritová, eds., *ČSSR a SSSR 1945. Dokumenty mezivládních jednání* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny and Brno: Doplněk, 1997), doc. nos. 10, 12, pp. 31–33, 35–36.
- 262 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 4. Bystrov wrote that the Foreign Ministry, on instruction from Clementis of 5 June 1945, did not take any further steps in this matter. Bystrov, *Únosy*, 117.
- 263 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 119.
- 264 Two notes handed to the Soviet embassy are dated 7 June 1945 (nos. 863/II-1/45 and 1696/II-1/45). I assume that one of them reacted to Boček’s memorandum. The Soviet memorandum of 27 August 1945 replies to both notes. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 5.
- 265 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 119.
- 266 *Ibid.*, 118, 119.

- 267 Ibid., 120.
- 268 Kaplan and Špiritová, *ČSSR a SSSR 1945*, doc. 48, pp. 114–115.
- 269 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 121, 122.
- 270 Ibid., 122.
- 271 Ibid., 123.
- 272 Kaplan and Špiritová, *ČSSR a SSSR 1945*, p. 137.
- 273 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 123, 124.
- 274 Kaplan and Špiritová, *ČSSR a SSSR 1945*, doc. 60, pp. 136, 137.
- 275 Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow, report of 15 October 1945, AMZV, USSR 1945–1959, box 37, folder 3.
- 276 Stark, “Hungarian Prisoners,” 204.
- 277 AMZV, USSR 1945–1959, box 37, folder 3.
- 278 Ibid.
- 279 Kaplan and Špiritová, *ČSSR a SSSR 1945*, doc. 64, p. 142.
- 280 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 126.
- 281 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 282 Clementis, print of a public lecture on 23 October 1945. Place of lecture and publisher not indicated.
- 283 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 284 Dekanozov, Vladimir Georgievich, b. 1898 in Baku (a Georgian born in Azerbaijan). He served in the government in Georgia where he worked with Lavrenti Beria, who later called him to Moscow. He entered the NKID (People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs) in April 1939, took part in the negotiations between Molotov and Hitler and became ambassador of the USSR to Germany. During and after the war, he was deputy to Molotov in the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. In April 1953 he was named minister of the interior and commissar of state security in Georgia. He was executed on 23 December 1953 after being found guilty of treason.
- 285 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 286 Memorandum of 30 January 1946, *ibid.*
- 287 AMZV, USSR 1953–59, box 37, folder 3.
- 288 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 289 Kaplan and Špiritová, *ČSSR a SSSR 1945*, doc. 87, pp. 188–189.
- 290 Vladimír Bystrov, *Z Prahy do Gulagu aneb Překáželi* (Prague: Bystrov a synové, 1999), 201.
- 291 Kaplan and Špiritová, *ČSSR a SSSR 1945*, doc. 178, pp. 480–482.
- 292 AVPRF, records “Dekanozov,” opis 7/417/, no. 1585.
- 293 Jan Němeček, Helena Nováčková, Ivan Štoviček and Jan Kuklík, *Československo-francouzské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních 1940–1945* (Prague: Karolinum, 2005), data from the index.
- 294 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 5, file no. 46.427/II-1/46.
- 295 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 296 Ibid.
- 297 See also the third chapter of of Part I, Section II, dealing with the deportations from Silesia and the Hlučín and Kravaře regions.
- 298 AMZV, USSR 1945–53, box 38, folder 4, memorandum of the Ministry of the Interior for the Foreign Ministry of 18 April 1946.

- 299 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War,” dispatch sent from Prague to the embassy in Moscow on 12 February 1946.
- 300 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 301 Ibid.
- 302 AVPRF, records “Vyshinsky,” opis 11/463/28, Zorin’s reply to Vyshinsky of 21 January 1946.
- 303 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 304 MID Archive—Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, AVPRF.
- 305 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 306 Ibid., ref. no. 225/confidential re. no. 38 412/V-2/46.
- 307 MZV—Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Czechoslovak).
- 308 Ibid., Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Moscow Embassy, 5 March 1946. Zeleneč, Velčice, Sučany, Banská Bystrica, Stará Ľubovňa are mentioned.
- 309 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 310 Miloš Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia* (Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1984), 289.
- 311 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 312 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 4. See also Memorandum of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 23 May 1946 and also the Moscow Embassy (1943–1960), box 22.
- 313 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, notes to dispatch 370/confidential/46, sent to the Moscow embassy, 24 May 1946.
- 314 Ibid., folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 315 Ibid.
- 316 AMZV, USSR 1954–59, box 37, folder 5, memorandum of 20 August 1947.
- 317 Ibid.
- 318 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
- 319 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from Horák to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry on 17 July 1946.
- 320 AVPRF, records “Vyshinsky,” opis 21/436/29.
- 321 Stark, “Hungarian Prisoners,” 208. See also the case of the repatriation of the Hungarian prisoner of war in 2000 in Section III: The Official Termination of Repatriation and the Epilogue. Also AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch of 27 July 1946 from the Moscow embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.
- 322 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch of 19 October 1946 from the Moscow embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.
- 323 Ibid., dispatch of 13 August 1946 from the Moscow embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.
- 324 Jaromír Kopecký (1899–1977), journalist, from 1935 in the diplomatic service, from 1938 in the Office of the Permanent Delegation of the Czechoslovak Republic at the United Nations in Geneva, ambassador in Switzerland (1945–1946), chairman of the Department for Poland and the Baltic States at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1946–1948), fired after February 1948. Sentenced for treason and then released in 1968.
- 325 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 326 Ibid.
- 327 AVPRF, records “Dekanozov,” opis 6/303/87.

- 328 AVPRF, records "Dekanozov," opis 6/303/87, "Kopiya dokladnoy zapiski na imya Molotova o peredache Spishyak chekhoslovatskomu pravitelstvu" (Copy of a Memo Addressed to Molotov on the Transfer of Spišiak to the Czechoslovak Government), 16 and 19 November 1945.
- 329 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 330 Ibid.
- 331 Ibid., folder "Prisoners of War."
- 332 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from Clementis no. 3572/47 of 5 January 1947.
- 333 Ibid., folder "Prisoners of War," Borek to Horák, 14 August 1946.
- 334 AMZV, USSR 1943–1950 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 335 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 23, directive of the Ministry of the Interior of 12 September 1946.
- 336 The request of the Ministry of the Interior, however, did not relate to the Volhynian Czechs whose repatriation was taking place at that time. The repatriation of the Volhynian Czechs was founded on the Czechoslovak–Soviet agreement about the mutual right of options and transfer. AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 337 Ibid.
- 338 Ibid., memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs no. 179.912/II-I/46 for the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow of 24 September 1946.
- 339 Ibid. Horák received information about Clementis's memorandum to Zorin of 2 November as well as from Outrata in his memorandum of 5 November 1946.
- 340 Ibid., folder "Prisoners of War," dispatch of 15 November 1946 from Horák to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry.
- 341 AVPRF, records "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 28/9/141. According to Alexandrov's report of the visit dated 6 December 1947. Regarding the phonetic transcription of the German name, the reverse transcription of the name into the Latin alphabet is not certain.
- 342 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 4; see also AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder "Prisoners of War."
- 343 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 344 Ibid., dispatch from Horák sent from Moscow to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, 20 November 1946.
- 345 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 346 AVPRF, records "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 28/7/141.
- 347 AMZV, USSR 1943–50 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 348 Ibid.
- 349 Ibid., dispatch from Horák sent from Moscow, 10 January 1947.
- 350 AVPRF, records "Vyshinsky," opis 12/440/32.
- 351 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 6.
- 352 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 353 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 6.
- 354 Ibid.
- 355 Ibid., appendix to the memorandum on the matter of the interned Czechoslovak citizens in the USSR from 10 April 1947.
- 356 AVPRF, records "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 28/por. 17/ind. 151.

- 357 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
358 Ibid.
359 Ibid., file no. 86.606/II-I/47, 23 April 1947.
360 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch no. 125 (sent from Prague, 12 April 1947) and no. 183 (sent from Moscow, 15 April 1947).
361 AMZV, USSR 1943–1960 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
362 See Letz, “Činnost sovietských orgánov NKVD,” 111.
363 Polák, František. “Cestou ze sovětského koncentráku,” *Cs. Magazin*, December (2007), <http://www.cs-magazin.com/index.php?a=a2007122055> (part 1); January (2008), <http://www.cs-magazin.com/index.php?a=a2008012055> (part 2); February (2008), <http://www.cs-magazin.com/index.php?a=a2008022063> (part 3); March (2008), <http://www.cs-magazin.com/index.php?a=a2008031048> (part 4).
364 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch no. 221, Horák 385/D/47.
365 Ibid., ref. no. 399/D/47, Moscow Embassy. Dispatch sent from the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, 16 May 1947, under no. 105.949, signed by Masaryk and Clementis.
366 Ibid., dispatch from Horák from Moscow to the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, 20 May 1947.
367 AVPRF, records “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 28/7/41.
368 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
369 Ibid., dispatch sent from Moscow embassy, 25 May 1947, no. 445/confidential/47.
370 AVPRF, records “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 28, por. 1, ind. 012; see also AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, folder “Prisoners of War.”
371 AMZV, ibid.
372 Ibid.
373 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
374 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4.

Screenings and Transports

- 375 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 5.
376 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
377 Boroň, “Násilne odvlečení do Sovietskeho zväzu,” 348.
378 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch sent by Horák from Moscow, 20 May 1947.
379 Ibid.
380 Ibid.
381 However, the decree mentioned was announced on 2 August 1945.
382 Units unclear: 9? A number between 90 and 99.
383 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
384 Ibid., dispatch of 6 August 1947, no. 394/Secret.
385 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
386 Ibid., dispatch sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 18 June 1947.
387 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8.
388 Ibid.
389 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2.
390 Ibid., folder 7.

- 391 A number of lists are deposited, for example, in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 3.
- 392 Ibid., box 38, folder 7.
- 393 Ibid., box 53, folder 4.
- 394 Ibid., box 37, folder 5.
- 395 Ibid.
- 396 Ibid., dispatch 721/D/47 sent from Prague, 15 August 1947, probably by the Territorial Department of the Foreign Ministry.
- 397 Ibid., dispatch filed under no. 747/D/47.
- 398 Ibid., box 37, folder 5.
- 399 Ibid.
- 400 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 141, 142; Juščák, *Odvlečení*, 284.
- 401 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 402 This concerns Clementis's dispatches of 22 August and 26 August 1947, quoted above.
- 403 Ibid.
- 404 Ibid., dispatch no. 447 from the Moscow Embassy, 27 August 1947.
- 405 Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia*, 251.
- 406 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 407 Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia*, 319–230.
- 408 Letz, "Činnost sovietských orgánov NKVD," 100, 111, Krno, from Letz's interview with him. Slightly shortened.
- 409 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from the embassy in Moscow, 11 October 1947, no. 568, Horák 942/D.
- 410 Ibid., dispatch no. 967/D/47, Borek 213.047/I-147, 14 October 1947.
- 411 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 412 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 134.
- 413 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 414 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 7. ref. no. 240.893-I-1, 22 November 1947.
- 415 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 3.
- 416 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 33.
- 417 Ibid.
- 418 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4. It has not been possible to find the instruction of which Golubev spoke.
- 419 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, ref. no. 1.137/D/47, 22 November 1947.
- 420 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2. These moods are documented, for example, by a very critical and determined letter from Mária Petriková of Nitra.
- 421 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2.
- 422 Ibid., ref. no. 191/Dův/48, sent by Líba (no. 31.128).
- 423 Ibid.
- 424 Stark, "Hungarian Prisoners," 205.
- 425 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 426 Ibid.
- 427 This concerned memorandum no. 46.427, handed to the Soviet embassy in Prague on 20 March 1946.

- 428 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from Pára 239.378, ref. no. 1.275/D/47.
- 429 AVPRF, records “Referentura po Chekchoslovakii,” opis 28/9/141.
- 430 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22.
- 431 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 10.
- 432 Ibid., initialed Borek, no. 96.185.
- 433 Ibid., initialed Kašpárek, no. 488/D, sent from Moscow, 17 May 1948.
- 434 Ibid., initialed Borek, 105.051, ref. no. 591/D/48, sent from Prague by Borek, 3 June 1948.
- 435 Ibid., Kašpárek 578/D, ref. no. 578/D/48, sent 1 June 1948.
- 436 Ibid., dispatch from Kašpárek 591/D.
- 437 Ibid., dispatch from Fiša 7.935 from Bucharest for the Foreign Ministry in Prague and the embassy in Moscow.
- 438 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from Laštovička 716/D sent to Prague, 13 July 1948.
- 439 Ibid., dispatch from Laštovička 715/D.
- 440 Ibid., dispatch from Laštovička 757/D sent from the Moscow embassy to Prague, 26 July 1948.
- 441 Ibid., dispatch from Borek 146.182.
- 442 Ibid., dispatch from Laštovička 724/D of 26 July 1948 and Foreign Ministry 154.752 of 29 July 1948.
- 443 Boroň, “Násilne odvlčení do Sovětského svazu,” 353–354.
- 444 Ibid., p. 359.
- 445 The lists mentioned are deposited in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 2; box 38, folder 2; box 50, folder 10.
- 446 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 1. This concerned lists prepared on the basis of an order from the ZV-SNB (Land Headquarters—Police Force) Bratislava, 853/214-6/8-48 of 31 August 1948, and a ruling from the Commissariat of the Interior of 23 July 1948, no. 13247-III/1/a-1948.
- 447 These lists are deposited in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 12; box 38, folder 13; box 39, folders 2 and 3. Also to be found here are notifications sent by returnees to the Foreign Ministry on their own initiative; also deposited here are individual applications for interventions for repatriation from the USSR.
- 448 A comprehensive collection of reports about the return of individuals sent by the repatriates themselves, by local committees and by police stations is deposited in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2; box 39, folder 3 and 9. Reports about returns of individuals are also deposited in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 5. Individual applications for intervention are mixed in with notifications of returns.
- 449 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folders 2 and 5.
- 450 AMZV, USSR 1943–1945, folder Chod úřadu (Office Operations), 1948–1949.
- 451 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from Horák 147/D sent to Prague, 6 February 1948.
- 452 Ibid., dispatch from Laštovička 716/D.
- 453 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, memorandum from Golubev to Counselor Emil Štefan of 7 August 1948.
- 454 Ibid.
- 455 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 121–122.

- 456 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 3.
- 457 Ibid., dispatch from Laštovička 716/D
- 458 General Alexander Fusek was the military attaché in the Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow. According to Miloš Krno's memoirs, "the Party ranks were strengthened by the military attaché, the elderly general Alexander Fusek. After his young wife had died giving birth, he completely collapsed." Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia*, 252.
- 459 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from Chýle 169.245.
- 460 Boroň, "Násilne odvléčení do Sovietského zväzu," 352–353.
- 461 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 22, dispatch from Chýle 172.554 of 25 August 1948.
- 462 AMZ, Moscow Embassy, 1943–1945, folder Chod úřadu (Office Operations), 1948–1949, dispatch from Laštovička to the Foreign Ministry, undated, ref. no. 97/Taj/821.
- 463 Archive of Charles University (AUK), fond FF, inv. no. 293, personal record of Jiří Horák.
- 464 Bratislava: AEP, 1995.
- 465 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 117, where the memoirs of Miloš Krno *Hory, rieky, ľudia* are quoted. The scene is described here.
- 466 Josef Tomeš, et al., *Český biografický slovník XX. století*, I-111 (Prague: Paseka, 1999).
- 467 Kudělka and Šimeček, *Československé práce*, 160–162.
- 468 Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia*, 250.
- 469 According to Tomeš, *Český biografický slovník*.
- 470 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 123.
- 471 Ibid., 127.
- 472 Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia*, 255.
- 473 Ibid.
- 474 Ibid., 256.
- 475 Ibid., 249.
- 476 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 117ff.
- 477 A combination of quotations from Vaško's memoirs and the title of Vaško's book: *Ne vším jsem byl rád. Vlastní životopis* (Not everything was joy for me. My own biography).
- 478 Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia*, 335.
- 479 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 90.
- 480 Julius Fučík (1903–1943), a Czechoslovak communist journalist and active member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, was executed by the Nazis. Under the Communist régime in Czechoslovakia, he became a heroic ideological symbol. The citation refers to his book on the Soviet Union *In a Country Where Tomorrow Means Yesterday* (1932).
- 481 This information about Vaško's life in Moscow is taken from his book, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, which I have quoted in many places. I have used especially the author's evidence on pp. 80–141.
- 482 For more detailed information I refer to the subchapter entitled "The End of the Desk for Repatriation from the USSR at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs" and the chapter entitled "The Repatriation Obligations of the USSR and International Diplomacy."
- 483 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 87.

484 Krno, *Hory, rieky, ľudia*, 251.

485 Ibid., 252.

486 AMZV, Moscow Embassy, 1943–1945, folder Chod úradu (Office Operations), 1948–1949.

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487 AVPRF, “Referentura po Chechoslovakii,” opis 29/8/146, pp. 97–99.

488 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8.

489 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8, ref. no. 20956/V-3A/49, subject: Prisoners of War and Civilians Interned in the USSR—Present State of Repatriation.

490 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 2.

491 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8, ref. no. 28.844/V-3A/49.

492 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8, subject: Czechoslovak State Citizens Interned in the USSR—Release.

493 Ibid., Laštovička 717-D sent from Moscow, 10 May 1949.

494 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 51, ref. no. 149.486/49A-II-1.

495 Ibid., dispatch from Laštovička 661/6.

496 Documents of a). Šatava of 13 May 1949 and b). Commissariat of Social Care of 21 May 1949. AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 51.

497 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 7, attachment to document MZV 317.302/50-C/II-1.

498 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 2, MNO, ref. no. 7541/dův/leg.odd., 9 June 1949, subject: End of the Repatriation of Prisoners of War and Internees from the USSR.

499 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 2.

500 On their deportation, see the section “Deportations from Slovakia” in the chapter titled “Czechoslovakia and Its Inhabitants as the Victims of Deportation.”

501 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 12, subject: Repatriation of Prisoners of War and Internees from the USSR, 10 September 1949.

502 AMZV, box 39, folder 7, attachment to the document MZV no. 317302/50-C/II-1.

503 This paragraph concerns agreement with the return of prisoners of war. All prisoners of war had to be repatriated to the end of 1948. The Soviet Union had many times, particularly on an international platform, affirmed that it had kept this agreement and that there were no longer any prisoners of war in its territory. In the Ministry of the Interior document we now come across the instruction of how to proceed during the repatriation of prisoners of war. It is extremely evident that the Czechoslovak government (including lower officials at the level of desk officers) knew very well that a considerable number of prisoners of war had not yet been repatriated. Agreement with the repatriation of prisoners of war would be made only after an individual consideration of each case and the greatest care had been taken.

504 A government bill was passed on 28 June 1949 to end reemigration.

505 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 77.

506 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 3, ref. no. 145.482/50.

507 United Nations General Assembly, Fifth Session, 28 August 1950, shelf-mark A/1339, classification UN.

- 508 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 6, Press Release, Department of State, June 17, 1949, no. 463.
- 509 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 3.
- 510 State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gossudarstvennyy arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii, henceforth GARF), Moscow, records “9401,” opis 1a, D269.T.1.L178-2-2.
- 511 Tsentralnoe khranilishche istoriko-dokumentalnykh kollektsiy (henceforth TsKhIDK), Moscow, opis 26, 1/p, 273, 1-3.
- 512 United Nations General Assembly, Fifth Session, 28 August 1950, shelf-mark A/1339, classification UN.
- 513 Vaško, *Ne všim jsem byl rád*, 136.
- 514 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 3, ref. no. 145.482/50.
- 515 The Soviet Union was not a signatory of the Geneva Convention on the protection of prisoners of war of 1929, but in 1948 signed the revised Geneva Convention about the protection of victims of war which, however, it did not ratify until 1944. See the section “Deportations from Slovakia,” chapter “Circumstances of Deportation,” subchapter “Prisoners of War.”
- 516 GARF, records “9401,” Secretariat of the Foreign Ministry of the USSR, *Perepiska s Predsedatelem Soveta Ministrov SSSR tov. Stalinym* (Correspondence with the Chairman of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR, Comrade Stalin), 3 April to 31 December 1951.
- 517 V.I. Ivkin, *Gosuderstvennaya vlast SSSR. Vysshie organy vlasti i upravleniya i ikh rukovoditeli 1923-1991* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1999), 277, 369–370.
- 518 GARF, records “9401,” opis 1a. D.269.T1, L1 178-202.
- 519 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 6.
- 520 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8. According to the document MZV ref. no. 130.956/49 of 25 August 1947.
- 521 Many applications for intervention on behalf of deported family members are in the Archive of the Czech Foreign Ministry. I refer above all here to AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 3, where there are a number of applications from 1947, 1948 and 1949.
- 522 GARF, records “9401.”
- 523 United States Senate, *USSR Labor Camps: Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary*, Ninety-Third Congress, First Section, February 1 and 2, 1973, Testimony of Avraham Shifrin.
- 524 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 8, for example, an application for intervention in the case of Pavel Bruski (or Brusky) of 7 June 1950.
- 525 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 35, folder 4.
- 526 *Ibid.*, box 39, folder 8.
- 527 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 3; the opinion of the local national committees on the repatriation of individuals including also negative viewpoints are in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 4.
- 528 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 39, folder 11.
- 529 *Ibid.*, folder 10.
- 530 *Ibid.*, folder 11.
- 531 *Ibid.*, folders 4, 5, 6.
- 532 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 13.

- 533 Ibid., box 53, folder 4.
534 Ibid., box 39, folder 2.
535 Ibid., folder 1.
536 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 50, folder 6.
537 Ibid., folder 7.
538 Ibid., box 38, folder 10.
539 Ibid., box 39, folder 8.
540 Ibid.
541 Ibid., box 50, folder 2.
542 Ibid., folder 4.
543 Ibid., folder 7.
544 Ibid.
545 Ibid., folder 2.
546 Ibid., folder 9.
547 Ibid.
548 According to Ječný, about ten cases were filled which Comrade Čunát did not explain until the next day in his memorandum.
549 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53.
550 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 77.
551 Archive of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, Prague, shelf-mark 305-582-2.
552 Martínková, “Náš člověk na Gulagu.”
553 *Svobodné slovo*, 10 January 1991.
554 Articles with this information were published in periodicals in the United States and the information circulated almost all the most important press agencies (for example, Larry Ryckman, “Americans May Still Be in Russia: KGB Archives Said to Give New Details,” Associated Press, 31 July 1992). The Czechoslovak press reacted on 31 July and 1 August 1992 in the Czechoslovak dailies *Mladá fronta DNES* and *Lidové noviny*. A more extensive article appeared in *Kosmopolitan* 3/92: 50–55.
555 Juščák, *Odvlečení*,
556 Ibid., 305, 306.
557 Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*; Dufek, *Návrat volyňských Čechů*; Vladimír Hostička, “Volyňští Češi a jejich persekuce v SSSR,” in *Střední a východní Evropa v krizi XX. století*, (Prague: Karolinum, 1998), 47–60; Vladimír Hostička, “Volyňští Češi a jejich persekuce v SSSR,” in *Kapitoly z dějin volyňských Čechů* (Prague: Sdružení Čechů z Volyně a jejich přátel, 1997), 47–110; Vladimír Hostička, “Vzpomínky volyňské Česky na život na Ukrajině a na Sibíři,” in *Za svobodu a demokracii I*, ed. Jaroslav Cuhra and Václav Veber (Prague: 1999), 276–290; Jaroslav Vaculík, *Dějiny volyňských Čechů I-III* (Prague: Sdružení Čechů z Volyně a jejich přátel, 1997, 1998, 2001).
558 AVPRF, records “Molotov,” opis 11/218/20, memorandum of Zorin to Molotov of 31 January 1949.
559 AVPRF, records “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” Recapitulation of Events Prepared by the 4th European Department (Teplov and Garmash) for Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dekanozov, 15 November 1947.
560 This date is given by Helena Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*. According to a memorandum from Teplov and Garmash to Dekanozov, Zorin’s memorandum of the

- Czechoslovak government on this matter was handed over already on 25 June 1945. AVPRF, "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 27/26/137.
- 561 Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 24.
- 562 GARF, records "9401," D 168.1497-498 (22 March 1947, Progress Report D 169.L289-290 (30 April 1947, Progress Report), D170. L130-131 (1 July 1947, Ending of Work on Option and Resettlement).
- 563 AVPRF, records "Dekanozov," opis 6/301/86. For the Agreement about Options and Resettlement, there are also documents in AVPRF, records "Dekanozov," opis 11/463/28.
- 564 AVPRF, records "Dekanozov," opis 6/307/87.
- 565 Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 26.
- 566 Ibid., 29.
- 567 Ibid., 42.
- 568 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 38, folder 10, a letter of 1 April 1946 from the liaison officer of the Czechoslovak Ministry of National Defense at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Agriculture. The letter was forwarded by the Czechoslovak Foreign Institute to the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 569 AVPRF, opis 27/26/137, recapitulation prepared by Teplov and Garmash for Dekanozov 15 November 1946.
- 570 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 50, folder 8.
- 571 AVPRF, records "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 27a/8/138a, and also the records "Vyshinsky," opis 11/463/28.
- 572 AVPRF, records "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 28/16/142.
- 573 Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 41.
- 574 AVPRF, records "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 27a/8/138a, Spravka o khode raboty Sovetsko-chekhoslovatskoy smeshannoy komissii po optatsii i pereseleniyu (Statement on Progress of Work of the Soviet–Czechoslovak Joint Commission on Option and Resettlement), 31 December 1946.
- 575 Ibid., opis 7/26/137.
- 576 Ibid., opis 27a/8/138a. The gradual shifting of deadlines was recapitulated in a note from the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, which confirmed the acceptance of the Soviet note.
- 577 AVPRF, records "Vyshinsky," opis 12/440/32.
- 578 AVPRF, *ibid.*
- 579 AVPRF, "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 28/24/54.
- 580 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 23.
- 581 AVPRF, "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 27a/8/138a. This is according to information for Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Vyshinsky about the work attitude of the Soviet–Czechoslovak Joint Commission for Option and Resettlement of 31 December 1946.
- 582 AVPRF, records "Molotov," opis 10/1059/75.
- 583 AVPRF, "Referentura po Chekhoslovakii," opis 28/17/142.
- 584 Ibid., opis 26/12/44.
- 585 Ibid.
- 586 Ibid.
- 587 Ibid.
- 588 AVPRF, opis 28/24/54. Zorin's note is from 4 February 1947.

- 589 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 53, folder 2.
- 590 Ibid., folders 3 and 4.
- 591 AMZV, USSR 1943–1945, folder Chod úřadu (Office Operations), 1948–1949, dispatch from Clementis 260.452, ref. no. 1488/dův.48.
- 592 Ibid.
- 593 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 50, folder 8.
- 594 Ibid., Vyshinsky to A.A. Lozovsky, 20 June 1946.
- 595 Nosková, *Návrat Čechů z Volyně*, 46.
- 596 Many related documents are, for example, in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 50, folders 1–5; box 53, folders 3, 4.
- 597 Moscow, AVPRF, records “IV. Evropeyskiy otдел, Dnevniky rabotnikov” (Diaries of employees/officials), pp. 153, 155, also records “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 29/8/146.
- 598 Vaško, *Ne vším jsem byl rád*, 121–122.
- 599 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 50, folder 5.
- 600 AVPRF, records “Vyshinsky,” opis 12/440/32. One of these announcements was worked out on 11 August 1947.
- 601 A number of cases have been documented; e.g., in AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 50, folder 1.
- 602 Documents on Transcarpathian Ukraine are, for example, in the records “Vyshinsky” in the AVPRF (opis 11/463/28), also in “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” and in other records in the AVPRF.
- 603 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Social Care, Ministry of the Interior and the Czechoslovak Foreign Institute.
- 604 AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 3.
- 605 Ibid., box 53, folder 4.
- 606 AMZV, USSR 1943–60 (Moscow Embassy), box 23, Report from the Moscow Embassy of 8 March 1945, ref. no. 352/D/49.
- 607 This text is available in both the Czech and Russian archives: AMZV, USSR 1945–59, box 37, folder 3, draft of the memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Ministry of the Interior of 30 September 1948, where this Soviet document is cited; AVPRF, “Referentura po Chekhoslovakii,” opis 28/33/55, *Perepiska po pravovym voprosam cheshskikh grazhdan* (Correspondence on the Legal Affairs of Czech Citizens), 82.

Conclusion

- 608 Applebaum, *Gulag*.
- 609 Moulis, *Podivné spojení*, 17.
- 610 Kaplan, *Československo v letech 1948–1953*, 21, 22.
- 611 Prokůš, op. cit., 46; Kaplan, *Československo v letech 1948–1953*.
- 612 For this opinion see, for example, Boroň, “Násilne odvlčení do Sovětského svazu,” 365.
- 613 Moulis, *Podivné spojení*, 17.
- 614 Klimek, A., “Názory Edvarda Beneše,” in Bystrický and Fano, 56–64.
- 615 Ibid.
- 616 Martínková, “Náš člověk na Gulagu.”

- 617 These Pazdera's positions were published by Michal Růžicka, see "Koleje stále duní," or www.szcpv.org.
 618 Letz, "Činnost sovietských orgánov NKVD," 109, 110.
 619 Applebaum, *Gulag*, 8–9.

Appendix

- 620 AMZV, Archive of International Treaties, shelf-mark L1607. The Czechoslovak ratification document was signed in London on 17 May 1944 by President Edvard Beneš and the acting minister of foreign affairs, Minister of State Hubert Ripka. The ratification document is filed under the same shelf-mark as the treaty.
 621 Letz, "Činnost sovietských orgánov NKVD," 110, 111.
 622 Lubek, "An Inquiry into United States–Czechoslovak Relations," 120.
 623 Letz, "Činnost sovietských orgánov NKVD."
 624 "Pravda o odvlečených," *Svobodné slovo*, 16 January 1991.
 625 Martinková, "Náš člověk na Gulagu."
 626 Bystrov, *Únosy*, 232.
 627 Boroň, "Násilne odvlečení do Sovetského zväzu," 363–365.
 628 Letz, "Činnost sovietských orgánov NKVD."
 629 Moulis, *Podivné spojenectví*, 17.
 630 Juščák, *Odvlečení*, 296–301.
 631 Barnovský, "Odvlečenie občanov ČSR," 10–21.
 632 Borák, "Českoslovenští občané," 123.
 633 Bystrov, "Odvlečení," 125, 126.
 634 Borák, "Českoslovenští občané z území dnešní České republiky," 125, 126.
 635 Ibid., 240, see also other works by this author.
 636 Moulis, *Podivné spojenectví*, 17.
 637 Martinková, "Náš člověk na Gulagu."
 638 Borák, "Českoslovenští občané z území dnešní České republiky," 125, 126.
 639 Czechoslovak embassy in Moscow, Memorandum of Conversation on 19 December 1991 and Telegram no. 0222, copy in the personal archive of the author.
 640 Galitsky, "Vrazheskie voennoplennye," 46.
 641 Tamara Juríková, "Výskum v archívoch Ruskej federácie na tému 'Slovenské obete perzekúcie na území ZSSR v rokoch 1941–1965,'" in *Perzekuce občanů z území dnešní České republiky*, ed. Mečislav Borák, 222–228.
 642 Borák, "Českoslovenští občané z území dnešní České republiky," 123–127.
 643 Boroň, "Násilne odvlečení do Sovetského zväzu," 344.

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